

Non-Holdings: Sculptural Mode of In-Betweenness and Material Fictions



✕ ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS

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Summary

Non-Holdings is Lina Herrmans' Master of Fine Art thesis project that delves into in-betweenness as a sculptural logic, exploring visual, temporal, functional, and ethical ambiguities. The thesis consists of an artistic component: an installation of ten interrelated sculptural works shown in Kuvan Kevät 2025 (Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Helsinki) and a written component that articulates the conceptual, material and procedural thinking behind the work. Together, they explore the themes of in-betweenness, marginality, and what remains unsettled between categories of form, function, and meaning.

The artistic component is built primarily through metal casting in aluminium, bronze, and tin, with selected use of concrete and steel. Works such as Surrounded by, I Start to Collect and I Feel Exactly the Same and Also Different I & II reveal a process where accidents, seams, and misalignments are not polished away but left visible as traces of time and process. These sculptural elements resemble infrastructural fragments yet refuse to declare function. Instead, they stage moments of suspension, where recognition and uncertainty coexist.

The written component frames the installation through a practice-led inquiry into connecting in-betweenness, unfixed narrative, and ambiguity to material methods and theoretical influences. It connects making and theory by reading casting as a dialogic process (material correspondence), by considering mistakes and seams as narrative traces, and by arguing for an ethics of slow, embodied perception. The text weaves theoretical interlocutors (Ursula K. Le Guin's carrier-bag logic; Sara Ahmed on orientation; Susie Scott on the social life of nothing) with literary affinities (Ali Smith, Olga Tokarczuk, Maggie Nelson) and close readings of the exhibited works. It also addresses process, naming and installation strategies.

The works do not provide answers, but hold space—materially and conceptually—for the viewer to navigate the in-between with sensitivity and openness.

Ultimately, the thesis concludes by advocating for “staying with the in-between” as a generative site of practice.

Artistic component:

Non-Holdings
(installation)
2025

Consists of:

Surrounded by, I Start to Collect
Cast aluminium, stones
Ø ca 59cm

I Feel Exactly the Same and Also Different II
Cast aluminium
27 x 27 cm

I Feel Exactly the Same and Also Different I
Aluminium
120 x 112 cm

Some Things Take Time and Seem to Fall Apart
Steel, bronze, magnets

Of a holder holding a holder holding a holder
Concrete, aluminium, steel, bronze, magnet

Bright Hours
Aluminium, cast aluminium, steel

On By a String
Concrete, cast tin

Lie Lie Lay
Cast aluminium

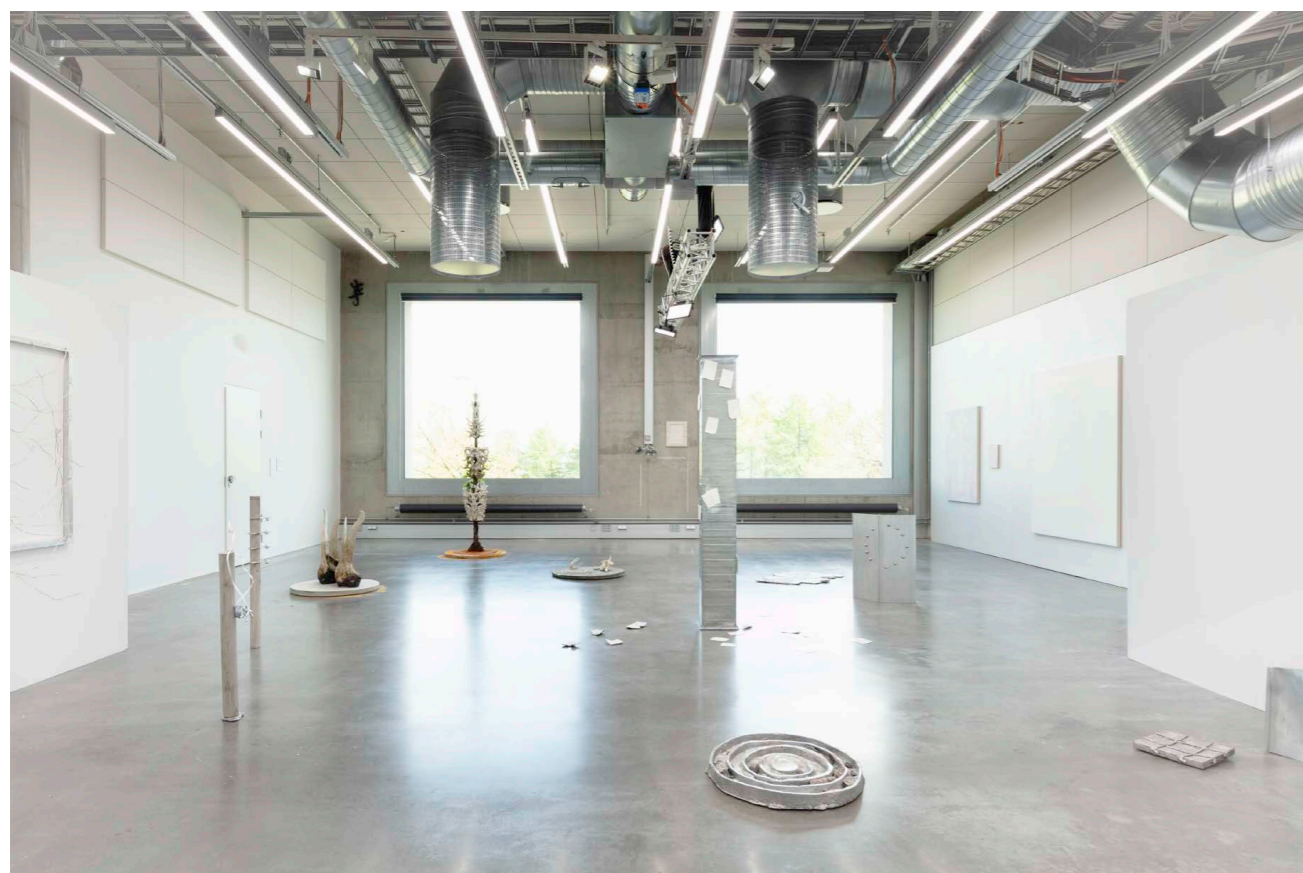
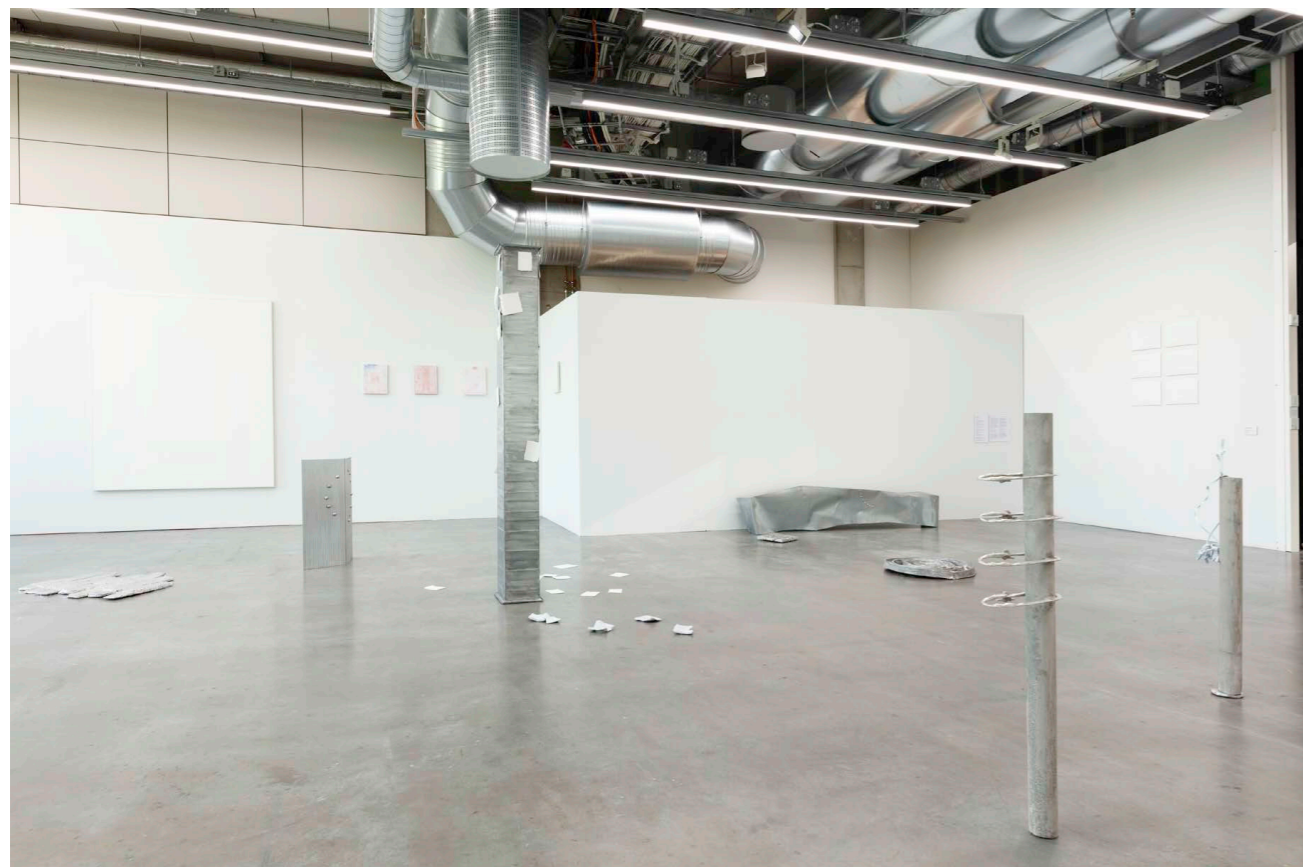
When Something is in the Way, I touch it
Aluminium

Exhibited in the Kuvan Kevät 2025 masters' thesis exhibition on the second floor of Mylly building, Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki.

17.5.-15.6.2025 in Helsinki, Finland.

Supervisors: Tiina Raitanen, Heini Aho

Examiners: Sara Bjarland, Anna Jensen





The brightness of a metal. Pieces of something that no longer exists. Glimpses of something that does not yet exist. The arrow of time twists and turns. Disintegration blends with emergence, aluminium bends effortlessly into a new position.

When the gaze stops, it focuses on the breaks, on the small details. Where there was supposed to be no flexibility, there is an impression of a fingerprint. The unyielding material has yielded. Perhaps materials can sometimes be encouraged to surpass themselves.

Fasteners that bind the air.

Empty space connects the works to each other with invisible threads.

And a miniature concrete column, that quietly mocks the architecture of the entire institution.

Herrmans' works do not appear as objects, but as situations. The air around the sculptures vibrates. I see traces of movement, but also of something else, something for which there are no words. The space attunes into an open field, where I find different feelings instead of explanatory interpretations. Instead of the center, I look at the gaps. The feeling of space is delightful. There is no solution, because there is no problem either.

Text: Alsa Ojala

Introduction: Held Loosely

In the body of work *Non-Holdings*, I explore an ongoing preoccupation with forms that are unresolved, suggestive, and somehow incomplete — structures that resist narrative closure or utility, yet persist with presence. These are objects that have a presence, a weight, and a silence to them: they appear concrete, stable, materially “finished,” but semantically open. They are made with hard materials (aluminium, bronze, tin, concrete) yet what they seem to carry is light, temporary, or flickering. The title *Non-Holdings* came from the feeling that these forms behave like containers, yet do not contain: brackets without attachments, or supports that might fail to support. They are objects that lean into ambiguity, and they often sit at the edge of or in-between categories. They gesture toward function, yet withhold it. They lean, structurally and semantically, toward indeterminacy.

If *Left Things*, my BFA thesis work, worked with estranged fragments — loose ends, softened materials, found objects — then *Non-Holdings* continues this exploration, but with a shift in tone and gravity. The objects here are heavier, more assertive in material presence, and more controlled in construction. The casting processes, traditional sand casting, concrete sand, ceramic shell, and more experimental raw clay molds, require a commitment to precision and patience. Where *Left Things* dealt with lightness, mutability, and fabric-like precarity, *Non-Holdings* deepens more into duration, resistance, and tension. The materials used — primarily metals and concrete — are slow to shape and slow to change. They require effort, heat, risk. And perhaps because of this, they become less about metaphor and more about matter, even as they remain open to interpret. The materials have changed: where before I used a wider range of found and softer materials, here I’ve committed almost entirely to cast metal — aluminium, bronze, and tin — and to concrete. The shift to metal and concrete is not just aesthetic but ideological: these are materials that demand time. These materials do not easily yield; they often resist the hand, and they hold time in different ways. They are resistant to change, but not immune to ambiguity. Bronze and tin, for example, are often associated with permanence and commemoration. But when cast in uncertain forms they begin to undo their own authority. Similarly, aluminium, despite its industrial ubiquity, becomes strange when used in intimate, hand-wrought ways. *Non-Holdings* thus builds on *Left Things* but turns the volume down even further: not toward silence, but toward density. The attention shifts from the object’s past to its present.

This thesis text articulates the thematic and conceptual threads running through *Non-Holdings*, beginning with its central themes of in-betweenness, unfixed narrative, and tensional ambiguity, and connect these to both my material methods and a set of theoretical and artistic interlocutors. I draw on for example the speculative sensibilities of Ursula K. Le Guin, the poetics of Maggie Nelson, the fragmented narrative strategies of Ali Smith and Olga Tokarczuk, and the sculptural languages of artists such as Magali Reus, Nina Canell, and Helen Marten. These voices are not presented as a framework imposed upon the work but as resonant companions, figures whose ideas flicker alongside the processes of making and thinking through sculpture. Their voices help situate this practice within a broader discourse that includes contemporary art, literature, and theory, but in a way that returns to the object — to the work, to its surface, and to its presence.

Thinking through the In-Between

In-Betweenness as Sculptural Logic

My practice often begins with an attraction to a form, a shape, a partial object. In Non-Holdings, these partialities accumulate. The sculptures occupy a space between categories. A metal casting may resemble a fragment of infrastructure or a piece of machinery, yet offer no obvious function. A concrete pole might look like a foundation for something larger, something no longer present or yet to become. The works resist legibility in a way that is intentional. They operate in what I think of as a sculptural mode of in-betweenness.

This in-betweenness is not limited to visual ambiguity — it is temporal, functional, and even ethical. The objects often feel like they are in transit between states, moments, or identities. The ambiguity is formal, but also temporal: are these fragments of something lost, or components of something yet to come? Is it ahead of its time or behind it? These questions do not need answers. What matters is the openness they generate. As Susie Scott writes in *The Social Life of Nothing*, “ambiguous or liminal phenomena are socially powerful because they allow for projection and interpretation — they invite us to make meaning without dictating what that meaning should be.”¹

This impulse aligns with Ursula K. Le Guin’s *Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*². Le Guin proposes that the earliest cultural technology was not the spear but the container: the bag, the net, the vessel that could carry and gather. From this, she suggests that stories do not need to be about heroic conquest (the spear), but can instead be about carrying, holding, and assembling—processes that are relational and open-ended. In many ways, Non-Holdings is a sculptural application of the carrier-bag model: here I am interested in how sculpture can suggest a capacity without necessarily fulfilling it. My cast forms might resemble brackets, shells, or vessels, but they do not carry anything except (maybe) their own weight. Their refusal to function is a kind of pause. Like Le Guin’s carrier bag, they offer space, not solution. They ask to be approached not as answers but as containers of possibility.

The In-Between

For a long time I have been drawn to what happens between things — between one object and another, between a gesture and its echo, between knowing and not knowing. The in-between is not, for me, a gap to be crossed or a problem to be solved. It is a space of generative uncertainty, where relations shift and meaning is unsettled. This is where my work lives: not at fixed points, but in the intervals that hold them apart.

In sculpture, the in-between might be literal — the space between two forms, a shadow that slips across the floor, the slight air gap between a leaning object and the wall. But it is also conceptual: the suspension between presence and absence, solidity and fragility, holding and letting go.

I think often of Homi K. Bhabha’s notion of the “third space”³, a site where hybrid meanings emerge, where categories are neither collapsed nor simply opposed, but reconfigured in relation. This resonates with my approach to composition. The elements in my installations do not fuse into a

1 Susie Scott, *The Social Life of Nothing: Silence, Invisibility and Emptiness in Tales of Lost Experience* (London: Routledge, 2019).

2 Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, (London: Ignota, 2019).

3 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

singular whole; they coexist in adjacency, negotiating their own distances. The viewer moves through these relations, encountering not objects alone but the charged space between them.

The in-between is also temporal. It is the pause between actions, the aftermath of a pour before the metal cools, the period in which concrete sets but is not yet solid. In these moments, the work is neither becoming nor complete; it inhabits a threshold. Henri Bergson’s writing on *durée*⁴ — a qualitative experience of time as flow — has helped me understand these thresholds as active rather than empty. Time, in this sense, is not measured in discrete units but felt as continuity, as the stretching and folding of experience.

These temporal thresholds, however, are not experienced in isolation: they are lived by bodies that approach, lean and move through space. To make sense of how those thresholds are perceived in the gallery, I turn to work that foregrounds embodiment and orientation.

Sara Ahmed’s writing on orientation in *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* has helped me understand this dynamic. She suggests that the way we are oriented toward objects — how we approach, lean in, recoil — shapes what becomes perceptible.⁵ In the installation of my work, I try to make space for this kind of embodied attention. The sculptures don’t command the space; they sit in it, shift within it, sometimes disappear into it. What matters is not the object alone, but the encounter — the tension between form and the air around it.

Ahmed’s account of orientation taught me to think of perception not as a neutral reception but as a set of habitual vectors, ways of facing and leaning that make some things salient while rendering others peripheral. In practice this means that my decisions about titles, placement and the modest gestures of making are all devices for re-orienting: a title can act like a compass, suggesting a posture (stoop, hover, crouch) before the body meets the object; a low, partly embedded cast asks the viewer to kneel, to attend with a close eye; a thin wire in a frame asks the eye to follow rather than to consume at once. By assembling these cues I try to produce small misalignments — moments when habitual lines of orientation falter — so that the viewer’s perception is not simply confirmed but displaced. That displacement is, for me, political as much as perceptual: it refuses the straight, serviceable sight that quickly categorizes and moves on, and instead cultivates an attention that lingers, registers difference, and feels its way into relation. Putting Ahmed alongside the practical logic of my practice makes visible how material form and linguistic cues (titles) jointly choreograph embodied encounters; the work’s in-between is therefore not merely spatial but orientational — a set of practiced deviations that open up other ways of standing in a room, other ways of recognizing what counts as near, far, or relevant.

This is also why I think through titles carefully. I do not title works to explain them, but to suggest a tone, a moment, a situation. Titles like *Surrounded by*, *I Start to Collect* or *Some Things Take Time and Seem to Fall Apart* do not describe what the sculpture is, but offer a kind of parallel rhythm — a fiction adjacent to form. The titles mark the works as already in motion, as things caught mid-thought. They open a temporal layer: not just what the work is, but when it is. Or maybe when it isn’t.

In the writing of Ali Smith, I find a similar logic. Her novels often exist in a kind of temporal in-between — past and present folded together, linearity interrupted by moments of drift. It’s not only a narrative strategy, but a philosophical stance: to dwell in simultaneity, contradiction, and affect. This has been instructive to how I think about sculptural form. What if a sculpture didn’t offer resolution, but held multiple tenses at once?

In thinking about the in-between, I also find resonance with Rosi Braidotti’s posthuman ethics⁶. She insists that subjectivity is never singular or autonomous, but always distributed across human

4 Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1910), 100–105.

5 Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

6 Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman: Life beyond the Human Condition* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013).

and nonhuman forces. When I pour metal or set concrete, what emerges is not only the trace of my gesture but also the agency of the material: the speed of cooling, the pull of gravity, the stress of a mold. Braidotti helps me articulate how these works inhabit a shared field of agency, where the in-between is not just a gap but an ethical space of co-composition between maker, matter,

and environment. This reframing has practical consequences for my practice: it changes how I account for authorship (the work is a choreography, not a monologue), how I plan processes (I leave room for the material's own temporality).

Language too can inhabit the in-between. Many of my titles — *I Feel Exactly the Same and Also Different, Some Things Take Time and Seem to Fall Apart* — emerge from moments where feeling and thought refuse to stabilise.

Perhaps the in-between is most present in the act of looking. As Alsa Ojala wrote of my work, the gaze “stops... on the breaks, on the small details,” where something rigid has yielded, where space “connects the works to each other with invisible threads.”⁷ This is the space I want to work in — not the space of certainty, but of attunement, where attention becomes a form of making.

In the in-between, nothing stands alone. Every object, gesture, and pause is part of a network of relations — visible and invisible, material and immaterial. It is here, in this territory, that my work finds its form.

The Social Life of Nothing

One of the theoretical companions to Non-Holdings has been Susie Scott's *The Social Life of Nothing*.⁸ Her work on absence, gaps, silence, and invisibility has helped clarify what I am aiming for in my sculptural language: not a lack of meaning, but a different mode of presence.

Scott proposes that “nothing” is not empty. It is full of social codes, absences that are felt, things not said but understood. Applied to sculpture, this suggests that a work need not represent or perform in a traditional sense to be meaningful. An unassuming bracket, a silent concrete block, each can become charged precisely through its under-articulation.

In Non-Holdings, the “non-” in the title can signal to a refusal to resolve. The works do not “hold” in the sense of offering support or containment. But neither do they collapse into formlessness. They exist in the space of “nothing”; not emptiness, but rather a form of suspended potential.

Scott writes: “Nothing is a concept in motion; it is not static, but enacted, perceived, and responded to.”⁹ My sculptures, similarly, do not say anything. But they do do something, and say something through that instead. They create a field of slowness, a friction against expectation. They ask the viewer to linger, to look again, to sit with the not-quite-ness of form. In this space the form and the surface with its mistakes starts to create its own narrative.

Thinking Through the In-Between

I have come to think of the in-between not as a concept to illustrate, but as a condition to inhabit. It surfaces again and again in my process. Not as a clearly defined theme, but as a tension I return to. Between weight and air. Between gesture and structure. Between recognition and abstraction. My

7 Alsa Ojala, *On Lina Herrmans' Body of Work*, exhibition text for Non-Holdings, 2025.

8 Susie Scott, *The Social Life of Nothing: Silence, Invisibility and Emptiness in Tales of Lost Experience* (London: Routledge, 2019).

9 Ibid.

sculptures seem to gather themselves at these thresholds, refusing to settle.

This refusal is a kind of ethical orientation. To inhabit the in-between is to resist fixity, not only in form, but in thought. In this sense, I often return to Gloria Anzaldúa's idea of the “borderland,” not simply as a geopolitical metaphor, but as a site of layered, unstable identity — a space of overlap, contradiction, and possibility.¹⁰ My objects do not always represent borderlands, but they carry traces of this logic: existing not in one state, but flickering between several.

In Non-Holdings, I am not trying to locate things within a binary — finished or unfinished, functional or useless, abstract or figurative — but to create forms that are shaped by the encounter between such terms. A sculpture coming up from the floor is neither fully integrated into the architecture, nor separate from it. A piece held together by magnets is both connected and tenuously apart. These physical arrangements become ways to hold questions open.

Slowness, for me, is one way of marking this in-betweenness. I make by hand, through casting, welding, and assembling — techniques that resist immediacy. This process produces what Héléne Cixous once called “the time of the approach,” a durational attentiveness where meaning is never quite declared, but sensed through nearness.¹¹ I am drawn to that space before understanding — where things are felt but not yet legible.

The viewer's encounter is part of this. The works do not ask to be interpreted in a straightforward way. Instead, they offer moments of hesitation: a bracket that leads nowhere, a void between two pieces that seems to vibrate, a trace of touch on a hard surface. These are not puzzles with hidden answers. They are invitations to stay with the uncertainty, to attend to what does not resolve.

Temporal Constructions and Literary Parallels

Literature has always been a quiet influence in my work in terms of tone, structure, and rhythm. I read fiction not to always understand a plot, but to sit with an atmosphere, a logic of slowness, of indirection. The works in Non-Holdings aim for something similar: not to communicate one clear message, but to hold the viewer in a state of active suspension, where attention becomes a form of meaning-making and thinking in itself.

In the writing of Ali Smith, time is often non-linear, fragmented, and poetic. Her novels do not progress in clean arcs but shift in tone and scale — images recur, stories echo and contradict each other. In *Autumn*, for instance, Smith writes about detritus, about cultural waste and bureaucratic collapse, while simultaneously spinning a narrative that is generous and alive.¹² Similarly, Olga Tokarczuk's *Flights* is a constellation of micro-narratives, philosophical fragments, and seemingly disconnected scenes.¹³ These texts mirror the sculptural logic I am working with: accumulations of parts, rhythms of association, stories without central protagonists.

There is also a material correspondence. In sculpture, as in fiction, structure matters. My compositions — groups of cast components, often arranged loosely in space, not fully attached — mirror literary techniques of juxtaposition and montage. One work might include a series of cast bronze parts, positioned close enough to suggest relation, but with no formal connection.. The viewer assembles meaning not from a clear narrative, but from adjacency, rhythm, and tension — the same way one reads a fragmented novel.

These writers help me give me a vocabulary for approaching my own work — one grounded in attentiveness, in slowness.

10 Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987).

11 Héléne Cixous, *The Laugh of the Medusa*, in *Signs*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Summer, 1976).

12 Ali Smith, *Autumn* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2016).

13 Olga Tokarczuk, *Flights*, trans. Jennifer Croft (London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2017).

Material correspondence and thresholds

Material Intelligence: Casting as Correspondence

Casting is both a technical method and a way of thinking with and through material. In *Non-Holdings*, I have worked predominantly with aluminium, bronze, and tin — each chosen not just for their formal qualities, but for the ways they allow for a tension between control and accident, intention and surprise.

The techniques I use — traditional sand casting, ceramic-shell casting, and more experimental raw clay molds (a method I explored during a residency in Bulgaria last autumn) — each involve moments of letting go. These approaches allow for different levels of control and accident. The molten metal's behavior in the mold is never entirely predictable. Once molten metal is poured, the outcome is partially surrendered to chance. Air bubbles, shifts in temperature, the irregularity of the mold's internal texture: all these elements leave their mark. Surface textures emerge from subtle imperfections; bubbles and breaks occur. In this way, the final object is a record of not just my decisions, but of a sort of resistance — of how the material responded. This responsiveness aligns with Tim Ingold's notion of material "correspondence." Ingold argues that materials are not inert matter awaiting form, but active participants in a dialogue with the maker.¹⁴ This feels particularly true in metal casting: the mold, the temperature, the moisture in the sand — all contribute to the outcome.

Concrete, too, offers its own intelligence. When poured into handmade molds, or left to cure in unstable conditions, it resists smoothness. Its surface is full of noise. In *Non-Holdings*, the use of concrete is minimal but significant: it provides counterweight, friction, a resistance to lightness. Where metal reflects and rings, concrete absorbs and silences. Its dullness contrasts with the reflectivity of aluminium or the warmth of bronze, making each material legible through its relation to the other.

The visibility of process is important. I do not polish away the seam lines or casting flaws completely. Instead, I often allow these moments of making-visible to remain. This emphasis on labor places my work in conversation with a lineage of sculpture that includes artists like Nina Canell, whose works often involve the suggestion of incomplete circuits, and Helen Marten, whose sculptural arrangements hinge on fragment and misfire. In Marten's words, she is drawn to "forms that are small semantic misfires... objects that climb into the architecture of our linguistic body but are never resolved."¹⁵ My own castings echo this: a corner bracket, a pole, a manhole cover—forms that suggest purpose, but defer it. They feel placed, familiar, even precise, but ultimately fail to resolve into specific systems.

The Sculptural Gesture as Carrier: Containers, Fragments, and Anti-Heroic Form

Returning to Ursula K. Le Guin's *Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, the figure of the container — humble, soft, receptive — offers a compelling countermodel to traditional art historical notions of the sculptural.¹⁶ Rather than aligning sculpture with monument, dominance, or aesthetic mastery, I am drawn to the idea of the work as a holding form — not to enclose, but to carry. The container is not

¹⁴ Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 57–60.

¹⁵ Helen Marten, quoted in Oliver Basciano, "Helen Marten: The Thoughtful Tactility of Things," *ArtReview*, October 2016.

¹⁶ Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, (London: Ignota, 2019).

a passive object; it organizes space and relation through non-coercive inclusion.

This is perhaps what draws me to casting as a method. Casting is inherently about containment and release: it involves negative and positive space, preparation and aftermath, enclosure and overflow. When I pour molten aluminium into sand or ceramic shell, I am engaging in a choreography of thresholds — between liquid and solid, shape and formlessness, heat and stability. The resulting form carries within it the traces of that negotiation.

Le Guin insists that the carrier bag is not just a metaphor for fiction, but a way of organizing knowledge, life, and society. This principle has guided how I think about sculpture: as a form that does not need to resolve or declare, but instead organizes fragments, makes space for adjacency, and suspends hierarchies of meaning.

Helen Marten's writing on the misfires also resonates with this. A bracket, a plug, a lip of metal: each offers the promise of legibility, but withholds it. They feel placed, even familiar, but they do not satisfy the impulse to decode.

This withholding is not about mystique or evasion. It is about disarming the urgency to know. This temporal repositioning away from instant legibility toward durational attentiveness is central to how I think about the politics of form. Like reading Tokarczuk's novels or sitting in a Nina Canell installation, meaning becomes relational, partial, and time-based.

Material Thresholds and Transformation

Working in metal, concrete, and other materials that pass through phases of change, I am constantly reminded that sculpture is not a static act but a negotiation with thresholds. The moment when molten aluminium begins to solidify, when bronze cools just enough to release from its mould, or when concrete moves from pliable to rigid: these are transitional states, in-between moments where transformation is visible. They are also the moments when my role as maker is most attentive, because the material is at its most vulnerable.

I think of these thresholds as sites where the work is neither one thing nor another. They resist simple categorisation, and yet they are essential to the life of the object. Tim Ingold's writing on "materials-in-their-becoming"¹⁷ captures this for me: matter is never inert, but always in a process of unfolding. Even when the final object appears still, it carries traces of its earlier states—heat patterns in the metal, a faint seam from the mold, the softness of concrete remembered in its surface.

These traces are the residue of a temporal relationship between myself and the material. My decisions are shaped in these thresholds, and in turn, the thresholds shape me. The slowness required to work with these materials — waiting for a pour to cool, for a casting to release — creates a different kind of authorship, one shared with the material's own agency. Jane Bennett's concept of "vibrant matter"¹⁸ can not not be mentioned here: the idea that materials are active participants, with their own rhythms and resistances, rather than passive recipients of form.

In *Non-Holdings*, several works carry the imprint of such transitional phases. In *Some Things Take Time and Seem to Fall Apart*, the steel and bronze appear caught mid-gesture, as if they might still be settling into their positions. In *Lie Lie Lay*, the aluminium surface holds faint ripples from its cooling process: traces of a time when it was liquid, unstable, and formless.

Transformation is not only material, but also perceptual. The viewer's encounter with the work

¹⁷ Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2013), 31.

¹⁸ Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

often involves a shift, from reading an object as solid to seeing its fragility, from recognising a familiar shape to realising it is something else entirely. This perceptual movement mirrors the physical transitions in making. It also connects back to what I value about the in-between: the space where one reading does not cancel the other, but both coexist.

I am aware that these thresholds can be subtle, easy to miss. But perhaps that is part of their significance. They require a slower mode of looking, a willingness to attune to what is almost — but not quite — settled. In this way, transformation is less about a single dramatic change and more about an ongoing negotiation. The work continues to transform in the space, in light, and in the shifting relation with its surroundings.

Temporal materiality and labor

Temporal Materiality: Labor, Touch, and the Politics of Slowness

One reason I work exclusively with physical, manual techniques is because these processes produce time. They are not instantaneous; they unfold. They require heat, pressure, rest. Metal does not forgive haste. Concrete takes its time. And in that temporality is a kind of ethics. To make something slowly is not simply to resist capital (though that matters); it is also to insert time into form.

Maggie Nelson's *On Freedom*¹⁹ discusses the relationship between artistic freedom and accountability. "It's easy," she writes, "to confuse refusal with liberty." For me, the want to not digitize, to outsource, or to industrialize my production is about accountability to the object, to the thing I am making. When I weld, grind, or cast, I am working through a form of knowing that is not conceptual but bodily. The decisions arise in heat, weight, resistance.

This haptic relationship to materiality means that each sculpture carries the residue of process. Many of the final works in *Non-Holdings* appear quiet, even minimal. But that minimalism is not about simplicity — it is about condensation. The labor is present, but compacted.

Material as Duration

The materials I use — metal and concrete — are often described as hard or industrial. But I experience them also as temporal. Aluminium carries the time of its melting and cooling. Bronze holds the echo of its casting. Even concrete, in its false solidity, bears the trace of its own setting, curing, changing. None of these materials are fixed. They age, corrode, shift slightly under weight. In that sense, every work is provisional.

This understanding of material (not as a noun, but as a verb) is central to the ethos of *Non-Holdings*. To cast is not simply to shape; it is to record a transition. The mold does not just produce a form; it captures a moment in time, a thermal event, a flux. What remains is not a symbol, but an index of that change. The surface of each piece, with its small imperfections and inconsistencies, is a kind of sedimented time.

¹⁹ Maggie Nelson, *On Freedom: Four Songs of Care and Constraint* (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2021), 87.

Here I am drawn to the thinking of Elizabeth Grosz, who writes of matter as "not inert or not passive, but always already in the process of becoming otherwise."²⁰ My sculptures do not illustrate this becoming, but they hold it. Their stillness is dense with past motion: the pouring, the grinding, the welding, the waiting.

There is, perhaps, an ethics in this refusal to perform — an ethic of spatial quiet. I do not want the work to declare itself, to compete. I want it to wait. And in waiting, to become a kind of companion — something you notice only gradually, maybe even reluctantly, but which stays with you.

This commitment to spatial restraint is political. It questions whose forms get to take up space loudly and whose exist in marginal registers. It invites the possibility that ambiguity, slowness, and even non-resolution might be more than aesthetic choices. They might be tactics for living differently with matter, with attention, with others.

On Fiction: Narrative, naming, and assemblage

Narrative and fiction

While the works in *Non-Holdings* do not tell stories in a conventional sense, they are not without fiction. That is, they do not necessarily tell stories, but they create space for stories to emerge. Like the associative structures of Ali Smith's or Olga Tokarczuk's writing — where time folds, characters blur, and plot is fragmentary — these objects are invitations to think sideways. Their fiction is speculative, not expository.

I am not interested in using form to point to absolute meaning, but in using form to open possibilities. The sculptural fictions in *Non-Holdings* emerge not from symbols but from gestures and their surfaces. The forms I make often resemble parts of tools, infrastructure, the street, but never cohere into full systems. This partialness is deliberate. It creates room for projection. The fiction they offer is not narrative but affective: an atmosphere of suspended function. They do not complete an idea — they allow one to hover.

In this sense, fiction in *Non-Holdings* is not a story, but a potential field. Like the prose of Ali Smith or Olga Tokarczuk, which often moves associatively, through fragments and temporal jumps, these sculptures operate in non-linear ways. They are not statements. They are not metaphors. They are things.

Magali Reus's work exemplifies this kind of organizational poetics. In her installations, industrial forms are replicated and hybridized into odd aggregates, shapes that resemble fridges, handles, venting systems, but are ultimately neither utilitarian nor symbolic²¹. They function like Le Guin's carrier bags: collecting, refusing to resolve. My own work shares the same logic: not to produce singular meaning, but to hold multiple, flickering suggestions.

Naming and Narration: Titles, Text, and the Space Between

²⁰ Elizabeth Grosz, *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics and Art* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 51.

²¹ Magali Reus, *Hot Cottons* (London: Sternberg Press, 2018).

In my practice the act of naming a work becomes an extension of the sculptural gesture itself — a way to hold meaning open rather than to close it down. The titles in Non-Holdings — like *Surrounded by, I Start to Collect, I Feel Exactly the Same and Also Different*, and *Of a holder holding a holder holding a holder* — are not meant to represent the labour of making or to provide clear explanations. Instead, they point toward moments and feelings, fiction and poetry, inviting a response that is associative rather than literal. Naming becomes less about labeling and more about opening a space where the viewer’s attention can settle, wander, and connect through suggestion and mood.

Alsa Ojala’s text on the body of work captures this well. She describes my sculptures as “situations” rather than objects, noting how “empty space connects the works to each other with invisible threads” and how “the air around the sculptures vibrates.”²² Her words shift the focus away from fixed meaning toward experience and relationship, encouraging a way of looking that welcomes feeling, uncertainty, and openness. When she says “there is no solution, because there is no problem either,” I understand this as pointing to a space of openness that generates questions rather than conclusions.

The titles also speak to moments of encounter and embodiment. For example, *When Something is in the Way, I Touch It* brings forward the tactile, physical connection between viewer and object — a prompt to be present to that moment of contact. *Some Things Take Time and Seem to Fall Apart* gestures toward duration and change without reducing the work to a simple story of decay or labour. Instead, it leaves room for layers of meaning and emotional resonance.

In this way, titling in Non-Holdings acts as a continuation of the sculptural language: fragments of fiction and feeling that remain at the edges of understanding. They invite a kind of engagement based on imagination and attentiveness, allowing meaning to shift and develop rather than settle once and for all.

This approach to naming leads naturally into a deeper consideration of the “in-between” — the liminal spaces where form and formlessness, presence and absence, language and silence overlap.

Assemblage and Composition: Between Refusal and Fiction

Assemblage in my practice is not the act of combining found objects, but rather an orientation toward fragmented wholeness. Each element I cast, whether in aluminium, bronze, or tin, emerges as a self-contained gesture. But it is in relation to other forms, to the space around them, and to the viewer’s body that these gestures begin to acquire meaning.

I take fiction not in the sense of narrative structure or invented story, but as a form of worlding — of creating conditions where meaning flickers, changes, and is never quite held in place. This is where my thinking is shaped not only by Ursula K. Le Guin but also by Ali Smith, whose writing resists linearity, embraces interruption, and finds form through simultaneity.²³

In *How to Be Both*, Smith moves between 15th-century fresco painting and contemporary teenage grief. The result is a text structured like a hinge, where temporalities meet without fully aligning.² That formal gesture mirrors my own interest in misalignment — between gesture and material, weight and support, cast and void.

In sculpture, misalignment is not a mistake. It is a way to produce unresolved proximity. My pieces do not fuse into one. They touch, lean, hover, stack, but rarely interlock. This creates a structural

²² Alsa Ojala, *On Lina Herrmans’ body of work*, exhibition text for Non-Holdings, 2025.

²³ Ali Smith, *Artful* (London: Penguin Books, 2013).

Ali Smith, *How to Be Both* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2014).

friction that keeps the viewer alert. Attuned to what does not quite settle.

In her study *The Social Life of Nothing*, Susie Scott argues that nothingness is not the absence of something, but the presence of absence: the structuring force behind pause, hesitation, withdrawal.²⁴ Many of my forms come close to nothing. They do not dominate a space. They are not necessarily loud. They resist the saturated gesture. In this way, nothingness becomes an active compositional force: a way to shape through restraint.

This relates closely to how Nina Canell uses energy, fragility, and almost-invisible materiality to stretch the limits of what sculpture can hold. In her work, cables, moisture, and broken infrastructure are activated not for their technological significance, but for their ability to conduct relation.²⁵ My own interest in wires, melted edges, residual traces and offcuts is grounded in a similar desire — not to illustrate decay or industrial memory, but to articulate the nearness of form to unforming.

Attentional forms & spacial arrangement

Attentional Forms: Making Time, Holding Space

To stand in front of a sculpture is to enter into a contract with time. Not the linear time of narrative or progression, but a slower, durational temporality — one that emerges between the viewer and the work, in the act of looking, hesitating, returning. This is where part of my interest lies now: not only in what a sculpture is, but in what it does to time. Or more precisely, what it asks of time.

Non-Holdings began as a formal inquiry into weight, fragmentation, misalignment but increasingly, the work has also become concerned with attention. Not spectacle, not affect, but a quieter modality: attention as persistence, patience, staying-with. If the works appear inert or reticent, it is not to deflect engagement but to stretch it. They demand nothing, but they ask for something: time, stillness, attunement.

This is not a neutral demand. In a world saturated with acceleration, to spend “unproductive” time with an object — time that offers no immediate comprehension, no narrative, no use-value — is an act of friction. Attention becomes a form of minor resistance. In this sense, I think of my works not as objects of contemplation in the traditional aesthetic sense, but as attentional forms: they are structured around how they might be looked at, misunderstood, ignored, or returned to.

Stillness as Active Space

Stillness, then, is not the absence of movement but the condition for a different kind of action. My sculptures are still, but they are not passive. They exert force through weight, presence, material integrity. They hold space not through gesture, but through relation: to the floor, to the wall, to one another, and to the viewer’s body. They shape the viewer’s path, subtly redirecting movement, asking for detour.

This spatial choreography is composed rather than designed. When installing, I spend long

²⁴ Susie Scott, *The Social Life of Nothing: Silence, Invisibility and Emptiness in Tales of Lost Experience* (London: Routledge, 2019).

²⁵ Nina Canell, *Nina Canell: Mid-Sentence*, ed. Fionn Meade (Berlin: Spector Books, 2020).

periods not only arranging, but observing — seeing how a piece leans, how its shadow falls, how it resonates or recedes. The installation becomes a process of tuning, less like placing furniture, more like arranging frequencies.

I often think here with the ideas of geographer Doreen Massey, who describes space not as a fixed container but as “a simultaneity of stories-so-far.”²⁶ This view of space — as layered, active, temporally thick — feels closer to how I approach installation. The room does not simply host the work; it becomes a network of relations: between materials, memory, bodies, light.

On Spatial Arrangement

Installation is central to my practice; How objects are placed, how they relate to walls, to floor, to light, to each other — these are compositional decisions as critical as material or form. In Non-Holdings, I think of the space as a field of friction. Not a clean gallery, but a terrain where things can sit uncomfortably, lean, tilt, balance.

Here, I’m thinking with Ursula K. Le Guin’s²⁷ concept once more, not just as fiction, but as structure. To display a sculpture as if it were a spear is to demand clarity, function, heroism. To let it rest on the floor, to let it sag or lean, is to invite a different logic: that of incompleteness, collectivity, pause.

In this, I find echoes in the practice of Nina Canell, whose installations often involve power cords, glass tubes, bits of material or energy transferred invisibly. Her works seem to be waiting for something, or passing something unseeable between parts. Helen Marten’s dense assemblages offer a different strategy: overwhelming the viewer with associations, visual codes, surplus. Magali Reus, by contrast, creates highly polished, industrial-feeling works that hover on the edge of recognition. All three use sculpture not as a declaration but as a suggestion — a hypothesis.

In my own work, I find myself somewhere between the restraint of Canell and the density of Marten. The materials I use — metal and concrete — lean toward the industrial, but I handle them with slowness. Nothing is mass-produced. The casting process becomes a way to translate raw material into potential form, while the final arrangement avoids resolution. Pieces are close, but not joined. Weight is real, not symbolic.

The Field Between Works

When I install a body of work, I rarely think of each piece as standing entirely on its own. Instead, I think of them as points in a field — positions that are in constant relation to one another, to the architecture, and to the movements of those who enter the space. This is why, for me, installation is not a secondary step after making. It is part of the making itself.

Being alone with materials is a kind of listening. This slow listening also informs my approach to installation. The way a piece leans, or casts a shadow, or sits against a wall — all of these are relational decisions, made by being with the work for long durations. Time spent understanding how it behaves. In this way, installation becomes also a form of attention, not arrangement.

The physical distance between works is never neutral. A gap is not simply empty space; it is charged, like the pause between words in a sentence. The works in Non-Holdings are arranged so that the spaces between them are as active as the objects themselves. The air feels almost threaded, as if something invisible connects each element. This echoes what Alsa Ojala described

26 Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: SAGE, 2005), 9.

27 Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, (London: Ignota, 2019).

in her text about the work: “empty space connects the works to each other with invisible threads.”²⁸

I often think of these spaces as in-between zones, where a viewer’s attention can drift without needing to fix on a single object. They are places of rest, but also of potential. They hold the tension between works. In some cases, that tension is soft — like the faint pull between two magnets just out of reach. In others, it is sharper, like the sudden awareness of a shift in scale or material weight.

I am drawn to how these spatial relations can unsettle hierarchies. No one work demands the role of centrepiece in the end. The viewer is invited to move in non-linear ways.

The field between works is as much the work as the cast aluminium or steel. It is a sculptural material in its own right, one that resists being possessed or fixed. It exists only in the act of being experienced, in the in-between of object and body, matter and air.

Slowness, Duration, and the Politics of Looking

Time in my work is not a neutral metric, either. It is a material, a surface treatment, a posture of attention. When I pour metal, I am obliged to wait: to watch the shimmer of liquid aluminium take a matte, to listen for the settling, to feel the slow cooling travel through a cast object as if it were a pulse. When concrete cures, there is a long period in which the piece is neither soft nor hard, neither a thing nor only a possibility. Those in-between temporalities — the flux of becoming — are where I make most of my decisions. They shape not only what I do with the material, but how I hope the viewer to be with the work.

Thinking with Henri Bergson helps me put some language around that feeling. Bergson insists that duration (*la durée*) is not a sequence of measurable instants but an indivisible flow in which qualitative differences accumulate; lived time is not clock-time but an internal, extended experience.²⁹ My installations create a field in which viewers can enter that kind of time: slow, layered, non-teleological. The sculptures do not resolve into a single apprehension; they can reveal more as the viewer returns, or as light and shadow change over an afternoon.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology gives a vocabulary for the embodied side of this durational looking. Perception is not a passive reception but an active, bodily engagement: the hand remembers touch even when it cannot touch, the eye anticipates a line’s continuation.³⁰ When I install a cast aluminium lip just a few centimeters from a concrete slab, the decision is informed by what Merleau-Ponty names as the chiasm of perception, the intertwining of the seer and the seen.³¹ That near-touch asks the viewer to negotiate their body with the space and to feel time as a modulation of expectation: the small hesitation before a step, the held breath at a borderline. In such moments, perception is itself an event that unfolds in time.

Maggie Nelson often treats feeling as a form of knowing; her prose in *Bluets* models attention to how things are felt rather than only how they appear.³² Nelson asks us to take feeling seriously as an epistemic mode; similarly, the sculptures ask for a mode of perception that is affective and temporal rather than purely cognitive. This is a practical orientation: the work trains attention by way of material stubbornness. When a lip of metal resists the eye’s quick naming — handle, bracket, ornament.

28 Alsa Ojala, *On Lina Herrmans’ body of work*, exhibition text for Non-Holdings, 2025.

29 Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1910).

30 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 2012).

31 Ibid.

32 Maggie Nelson, *Bluets* (Seattle: Wave Books, 2009).

There is another practical reason slowness matters: technique. The temporality of making—mixing, waiting, striking out a seam, re-polishing a weld — leaves traces. I do not tidy every mark away. The seam line, the slight warpage where a mold shifted, the tiny grain left by sand casting—these are indexes of process and indexes of time. Tim Ingold’s idea of “materials-in-the-making” suggests that materials themselves carry histories of engagement; they are not inert repositories but participants in becoming.³³ Leaving traces is a way of registering that co-authorship of time between maker and matter.

Perception also shifts over longer temporalities than a single viewing. I am interested in how works inhabit institutional time — exhibition openings, weeks of display, the slow cooling of gallery lights over a month. Works continue to change: dust collects in crevices; a polished edge oxidizes; visitors’ bodies press new (invisible) pathways through an installation. These small changes are part of the life of the work and of its relationship to perception. To assert that sculpture is finished at the moment of installation is to deny an ongoing temporal ecology in which meaning accrues and dissipates.

This perspective also reframes the viewer’s task. Looking becomes an ethical act: a decision to spend time, to be present, to allow perceptual slowness to restructure desire for instant interpretation. That ethical claim matters materially: a viewer who lingers in front of *Surrounded by*, *I Start to Collect* or *I Feel Exactly the Same and Also Different I* is engaging in a sort of labor — emotional and cognitive. The installation, then, models an alternative temporality.

Finally, time in these works operates across registers — material, perceptual, narrative. Fragments evoke stories that are never closed; titles function as cues for imaginative duration rather than labels to be quickly decoded. Ali Smith’s fragmentary narratives and Ursula K. Le Guin’s carrier-bag idea have both clarified for me how a non-linear temporality can be generative: story as accumulation rather than closure.³⁴ In *Non-Holdings* the viewer becomes a co-author of the narrative, invited to occupy pauses, to extend slippages, to tolerate the provisional.

Time and perception are therefore not incidental to my work; they are part of its medium. I do not only make objects to be looked at; I compose temporal situations where looking is transformed into an ongoing practice. In doing so, I hope to offer a place where the in-between is not an absence but the very time of attention.

33 Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 25–40.

34 Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, (London: Ignota, 2019); Ali Smith, *How to Be Both* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2014).

Close Readings: Works from *Non-Holdings* / Synthesis

Before I read the works individually, it is useful to restate the means by which I approach them. I treat each element as a partial act, an index of process and a node in a relational field. My titles operate as companion cues rather than labels; they prompt moods and situations rather than definitions. I am committed to keeping traces of making visible: seam lines, cooling ripples, sand texture, small distortions. These are not blemishes to be hidden but records of the threshold states through which matter passes. In this view, the viewer’s time with a work participates in the object’s life: perception and material history are entangled. This is the practical and ethical frame for the readings that follow.

I Feel Exactly the Same and Also Different I

The work reads as a frame; a familiar object that ordinarily contains or demarcates. Here the frame is hand-worked aluminium whose interior field has been threaded with long, delicate lengths of aluminium wire. The wires do not cut a geometric grid so much as trace hesitant, loose arcs. They are tied together in knots and allowed to hang, to sweep, to fall; some strands cross in light tangles, while others pull away from the surface and hang more into the room. The work’s silhouette is mostly white space; the thin metal lines and their faint shadows do most of the work of meaning-making.

Small marks of where the wire joints were welded and minute fingerprints on the surface. Because the wires are thin, they read sometimes as drawing in space: an aluminium drawing rather than a constructed device. You are asked to follow a thread instead of scanning a surface; you are invited to consider the negative spaces the lines create.

This is where the work’s title — *I Feel Exactly the Same and Also Different* — operates as a posture. The piece stages repetition and variation at once: the square returns, but each wire is slightly different though made of the same material; knots recur, but never in identical configurations. Function is suggested (these could be ties, supports, part of a device) but never delivered. The lines hold nothing except their own modest histories: the traces of handling, the memory of tension, the tiny oscillations of surface created when wire meets frame.





Of a holder holding a holder holding a holder — concrete, aluminium, steel, bronze, magnet

This recursive title signals a recursive problem: systems of support that loop back onto themselves. The work assembles a small concrete column, an aluminium puddle, a metal loop, bronze fragments and a magnet.

Here, the different materials instantiate distinct temporal registers. Concrete indexes slow geological or institutional time (its cure is measured in hours and days); bronze carries an art-historical latency, a slow cultural memory; aluminium reads as contemporary, light, industrial and immediate. Layering these materials enacts Rosi Braidotti's account of subjects-in-process: each element is a different form of becoming, and together they stage a heterogeneous temporality.¹ The title's stutter — the iterative "holder" — is a small logic of recursion: supports that support supports, a chain that can either stabilize or multiply ambiguity.

As with the other works in *Non-Holdings*, this object stages an in-between: not quite tool, not quite sculpture; not fixed, not free. The composition asks for a reorientation of attention — a lean, a stoop, a momentary inspection — so that the small, provisional ties between parts become the work's subject rather than any ultimate use.

¹ Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman: Life beyond the Human Condition* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 1–20.



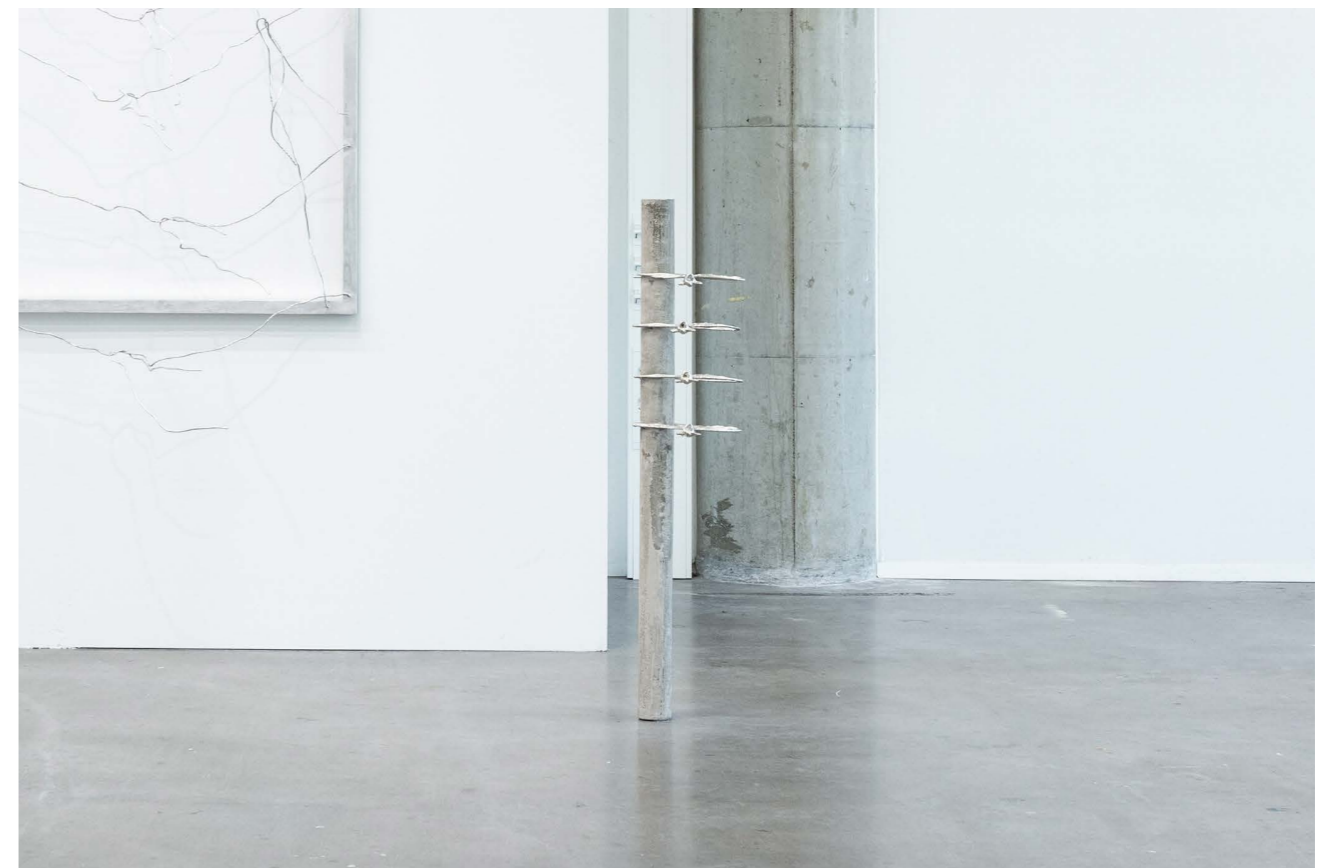


On By a String — concrete, cast tin

On By a String is a vertical concrete post, thin and column-like, into which a series of thin looped forms of cast tin are threaded and knotted around the shaft. At a glance the piece reads as a slim totem or a makeshift stanchion; up close the tin loops are full of small fingerprints, drips and joins — the record of a quick, hand-built model fossilised in metal — while the concrete retains the porous, slightly mottled skin of a hand-poured mold.

The idea of being “on by a string” evokes a connection to something held together by minimal means. Tin’s malleability and the way it records surface gestures makes the metal look both light and fragile; concrete offers counterweight. The viewer’s perception oscillates between expecting solidity and fearing collapse.

The tin loops sit like gestures of tying or calling-aid, each knot different, each ring imperfect; they suggest a function (hooks, pegs, fastenings) without ever performing one. Because they are thin and the shape is organic, they read as hesitant instructions: come closer, hold here, or don’t. The concrete post grounds the piece materially and temporally while the tin preserves the immediacy of the hand.





Some Things Take Time and Seem to Fall Apart — steel, bronze, magnets

Some Things Take Time and Seem to Fall Apart is a vertical steel post — rough, matte, and slightly scored — set upright. Around its shaft are small, white-painted steel shapes that read post-it note -like: square, torn, casually attached. On the floor nearby sit a scatter of low bronze casts, their surfaces pallid from a light patina. Small magnets anchor some of the notes to the post.

The standing post suggests structure and support; the note-like pieces imply communication, reminder, or annotation. But the way the notes are arranged — some cling, some fall — undercuts any tidy reading. The bronze fragments on the floor pick up this ambiguity: they look like things that have slipped free of an intended system, like reminders dropped and left to settle.

Seen together the parts stage a temporal logic: gestures of attachment and release, the slow settling of bronze, the immediate, improvised acts of fastening. The title points this out; the work does not dramatize collapse so much as observe how small failures and delays accumulate. It asks the viewer to slow down: to notice the tension between holding and letting go, between the function a post-it suggests and the stubborn materiality that refuses to behave like a page.



Surrounded by, I Start to Collect — cast aluminium, stones

Surrounded by, I Start to Collect is a low, circular cast aluminium form, about the size of a manhole cover, lying flat on the floor. Its surface is patterned with concentric ridges, within which small stones are caught and held, as if they had become lodged there by accident. The image is familiar: gravel stuck in the grooves of a shoe in winter, fragments that cling and refuse to let go.

The aluminium frame seems to organize, but the stones disrupt its order. Their irregularity pulls against the smooth, circular rhythm of the cast, making the piece less about symmetry than about interruption. It hovers between being infrastructural — something like a cover or plate — and something far more provisional, a fragment that insists on its own incompleteness.

What lingers is this tension between structure and accident: the ridges provide a place to settle, but what settles never quite fits. This oscillation speaks to the in-between: structure and accident, containment and overflow. The stones are neither fully part of the aluminium form nor separate from it, but exist in a space of attachment that is unresolved. It is in this unresolved state that the work becomes active, drawing attention not to closure, but to the subtle persistence of what clings, interrupts, and unsettles.



Lie Lie Lay — cast aluminium

Lie Lie Lay is a low, floor-bound cast aluminium work. From a distance it reads like a flattened weave or a dropped piece of fabric turned to metal; up close the surface is irregular. The piece lies there, quietly horizontal, asking for a near view rather than a frontal proclamation.

Repetition of the strip, the slight offset of each element, and the irregular edge where the metal cooled give the work a rhythm. The surface pockets and seams register process, so the object is always telling its making as much as it shows a form.

The title — Lie Lie Lay — doubles quietly between resting and speaking, between reclining and the slippage of truth. The work seems to embody that double sense: it lies flat, it rests in the room, but it also stages a kind of claim about materiality that is not entirely straightforward. The object suggests a habitual action made visible: something laid down, left, then held in place by its own order.

The title's repetition — Lie Lie — is a verbal stutter that suggests both seduction and falsehood, a lullaby perhaps, and also a prodding: lie down, lie, lie. This double address — to the hand that made it and to the body that encounters it — creates a slow cognitive double take. The third word, Lay, shifts grammatical angle and puts the body in the frame.

In exhibition the piece is placed at a human scale that invites bodily projection: it functions structurally as an object yet suggests postural possibility. The viewer hovers between reading the form as an artefact and sensing it as a potential posture. That hover is the in-between I make space for.

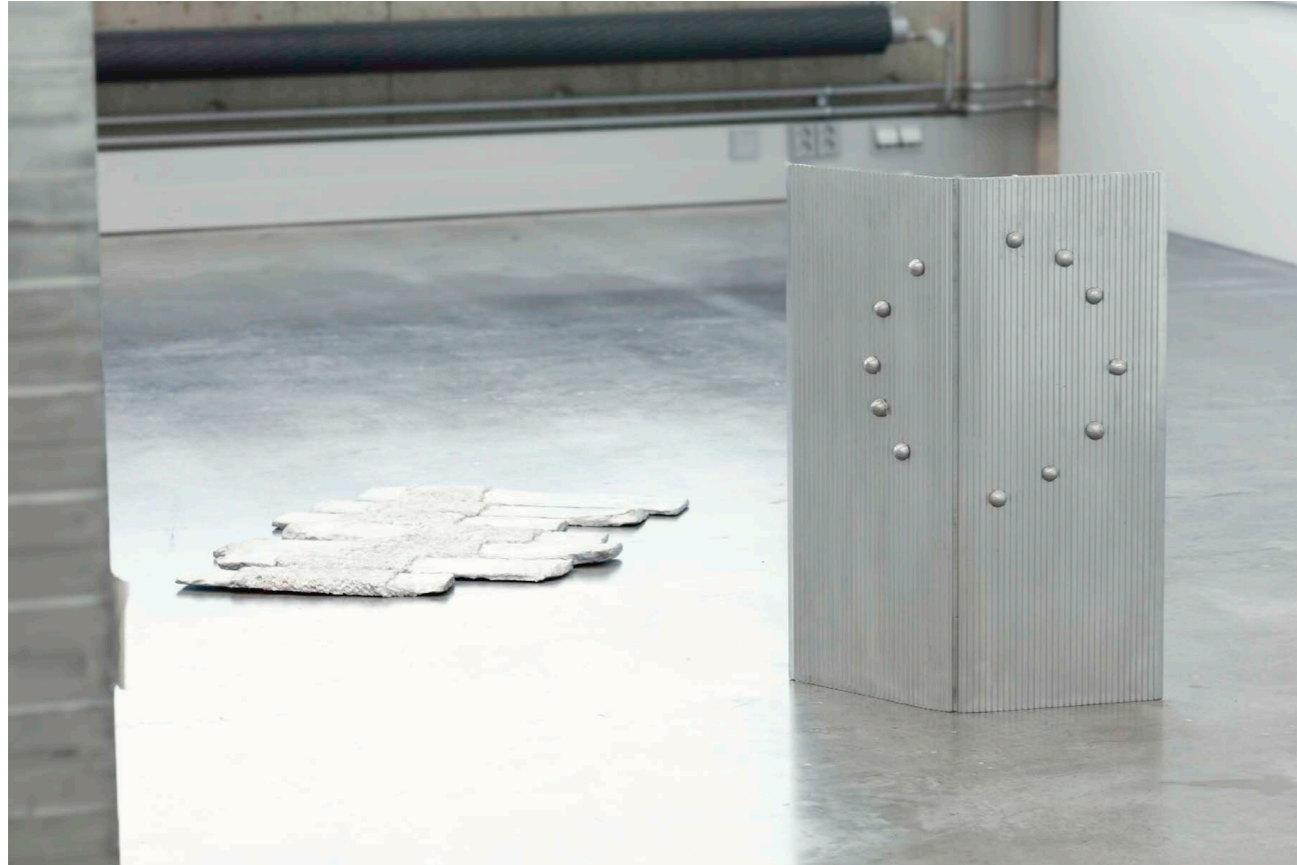


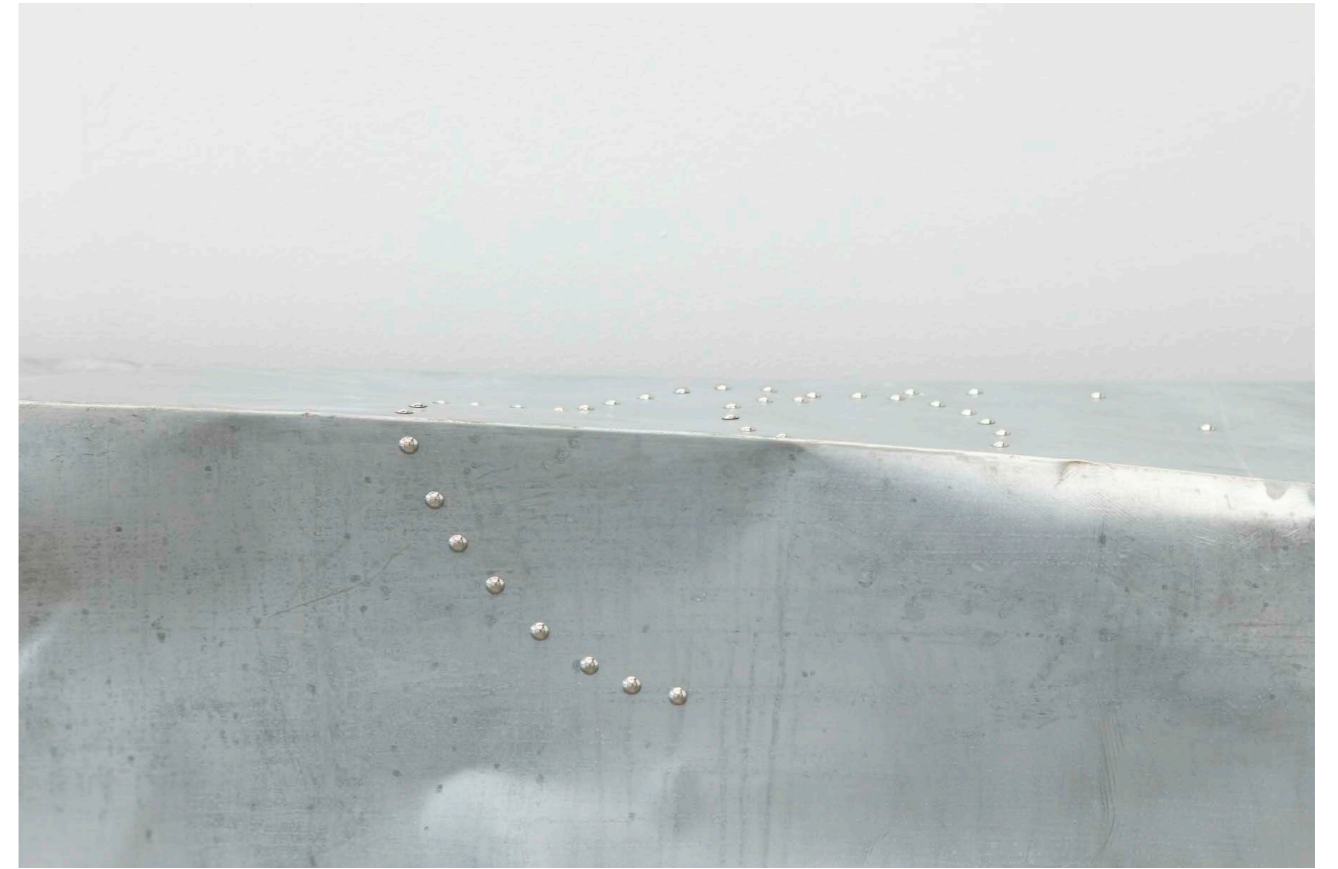
Bright Hours — aluminium, cast aluminium, steel

Bright Hours is a freestanding, two-panel aluminium object that reads at once like a fragment of architecture and a portable screen. Each panel is vertically ribbed and the two planes meet at a soft angle. Small round studs — bolts, cast beads — are arranged across the surfaces like punctuation or constellations mapped onto a technical skin.

Up close the aluminium is full of human marks: slight abrasions, brushing, the gloss of hand-polished edges and the coarse seam where metal was folded and joined. The studs feel like notes stuck to a page.

The piece sits between functions. It could be a partition, a folded column, a signboard — yet none of these uses quite fit. Its reflective face captures the room's light, the gallery's concrete floor, the scattered cast pieces at its base. The title, *Bright Hours*, registers that slant of time and light: hours that catch on a surface, register as marks, and pass without resolving into event.





I Feel Exactly the Same and Also Different II

The second piece of the same name is the first one's echo. Instead of a frame of airy line, I cast a compact aluminium slab that is patterned with a lattice of raised bands and knots as if string had been laid over the square and then fossilized into metal. The knots appear as small bulges; the bands between them are slightly irregular.

Technically the piece is a study in captured process. I built the model in an improvisatory way, arranging wax to act like string on a cardboard box and then cast the whole assembly so that those ephemeral lines became permanent. The seams, the shelling of metal, the little ripples where the pour met air and where the coal of the burnt cardboard had gotten stuck inside the mold. These traces remain intentionally visible. They read as the object's own archive: evidence of heat, of waiting, of repeated effort. Where the wall piece invites the gaze to float through space, the slab insists on contact (visual contact, at least): differences in sheen and texture become legible only up close. The knots, though static, still suggest holding.

The framed work prolongs air and the movement of line; the slab condenses time and fixes gesture. Both are square; both are bound by knots or strings; both stage holding without necessarily containing. The title — *I Feel Exactly the Same and Also Different* — is literal and ironic: the works are siblings yet their material logics produce different modes of attention.

Both works explore how knots and ties function as devices of relation rather than merely as fasteners: they map social and perceptual connections while simultaneously articulating the limits of utility.



When Something is in the Way, I touch it — aluminium

This piece began as a small, practical decision that slowly became an insistence. I cast a series of aluminium wedges that function as door stoppers and placed them at the foot of the gallery door to keep the threshold open. Wedges are used for keeping things open, for keeping things steady in their position, for cracking stones into smaller pieces and for opening molds after the cast is ready: they are quite literally always stuck in the in-between.

Visually the stoppers read as fragments — little casts allied with construction detritus rather than the polished artifacts of display. Because they sit at the edge between building and exhibition, they mediate two regimes: the institutional architecture (the door, who may pass, what is kept in or out) and the intimate register of touch (the small human gesture of wedging something under a hinge). The object is both tool and sculpture; it performs a function yet resists instrumentalization as mere prop.



Together, the pieces form a constellation rather than a hierarchy: no one object functions as an emblem; their field-relations constitute meaning. In this way the project tests Le Guin's carrier-bag logic in sculptural form: instead of a heroic teleology, *Non-Holdings* houses fragments, relations, and durations that allow narrative and affect to emerge without closure.³⁵

Conclusions — Staying with the In-Between

When I look back over *Non-Holdings* and the writing that has accompanied it, what keeps returning is not a single thesis but a posture: an insistence that the in-between is itself a legitimate and generative site of practice. I do not mean "in-between" as only absence, a gap to be filled; I mean it as a lived condition where material processes, perceptual habits, narrative fragments and even

³⁵ Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, (London: Ignota, 2019)

ethical choices cohere into a field that can be worked with. The installation is a small argument for staying there — slowly, attentively, with hands and eyes open.

That posture has three practical dimensions that I want to state plainly: how I make, how I name, and how I ask others to look.

First, making. The decision to work primarily through casting, welding and manual practices was not merely a nostalgic clinging to craft but a deliberate method for producing thresholds: molten to solid, slurry to stone-like cure, pliant to fixed. These thresholds are where the material asserts itself and where I must listen. As Tim Ingold insists, materials are not passive stuff but participants in making; they “speak” through resistance, through the seams and textures that remain after a pour.³⁶ I have learned to treat those residues — not as faults to be erased but as indexes of relation. §

Making is a form of thinking. Many of the theoretical moves here—about in-betweenness, thing-power, the temporal thickness of matter — came into being within the studio, through repeated failures and adjustments. In that sense my methodology has been iterative and reflexive: theory informed making and making forced a rethinking of theory.

Second, naming. Naming is a working gesture. Titles in *Non-Holdings* are not labels in the documentary sense; they are companion gestures that extend a work’s field of meaning. They operate like small narrative seeds or affective cues that push the viewer toward associative time rather than toward immediate decoding. Naming and making are contiguous practices: the language of the titles folds back into the sculptural field and helps build the “carrier-bag” composition I have described.³⁷

Ursula K. Le Guin’s carrier-bag idea helped me think about language as a way of holding rather than of asserting: titles can gather, summon, or cue, rather than provide a single, authoritative reading. I choose phrases that evoke moments of feeling, ways of touching, halves of an image — phrases that are not summative but suggestive. Naming becomes a way of inviting the viewer into an associative time, an act of narration that prefers accumulation to closure.

Third, looking. Asking for slow attention is an ethical claim as much as an aesthetic one. Henri Bergson taught me to think of duration as qualitative experience rather than clocked seconds;³⁸ Maurice Merleau-Ponty taught that perception is embodied and tactically engaged.³⁹ *Non-Holdings* stages situations in which perception becomes an active, time-embedded practice: to stoop, to hold one’s breath for a tilt of light, to return to a fragment and read a new seam. This is a proposition about what kinds of attention contemporary life might value and cultivate. Maggie Nelson’s insistence that feeling can be a form of knowledge resonates here — attention that is affective, slow and sustained is a form of inquiry.⁴⁰

Proximity produces narrative possibility without closure. The installation logic — pieces set close

36 Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).

37 Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, (London: Ignota, 2019)

38 Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1910).

39 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 2012).

40 Maggie Nelson, *Bluets* (Seattle: Wave Books, 2009).

but not touching, arranged in fields of tension — shows how adjacency can generate imagined systems and withheld stories. The viewer becomes a co-narrator: interpretation is not simply extracted from the object but constructed in the intervals between objects and through durational looking.

From those three practical positions follow a set of claims that shape what the work is trying to do in the world.

The works demonstrate that indeterminacy can generate relation. Proximity without fusion — near-identical cast bits that do not join, a knot that almost holds — creates a field for imagination and for tactile enquiry. These are not rhetorical tricks but structural strategies: adjacency as a grammar of potential meaning.

A seam line, a cooling ripple, the grain of a sandcast mold are not mere evidence of technique; they are bits of knowledge about process, time, and labor. Allowing those traces to remain legible undoes the illusion of seamless fabrication and repositions the viewer as witness to making.

I borrow Le Guin’s carrier-bag logic to insist that stories can be accumulative, not climactic.⁴¹ The installation invites the viewer to assemble small stories out of fragments, to accept that simultaneity and contradiction are sometimes more truthful than tidy endings.

In a culture that commodifies speed and immediacy, the installation tries to preserve a small architecture of delay: works that require time are also works that teach time.

To finish where I began: *Non-Holdings* is less an answer than an ongoing disposition toward practice. It is a set of processes that aim to make the in-between legible and inhabitable. The in-between, for me, is not a stage I want to move past; it is a place I want to learn from, again and again.

41 Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, (London: Ignota, 2019)

Footnotes listed

1. Susie Scott, *The Social Life of Nothing* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 45.
2. Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, (London: Ignota, 2019).
3. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).
4. Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1910), 100–105.
5. Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).
6. Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman: Life beyond the Human Condition* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013).
7. Alsa Ojala, "On Lina Herrmans' Body of Work," exhibition text for Non-Holdings, 2025.
8. Susie Scott, *The Social Life of Nothing: Silence, Invisibility and Emptiness in Tales of Lost Experience* (New York: Routledge, 2019).
9. Susie Scott, *The Social Life of Nothing: Silence, Invisibility and Emptiness in Tales of Lost Experience* (New York: Routledge, 2019).
10. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987).
11. Hélène Cixous, *The Laugh of the Medusa*, in *Signs*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Summer, 1976).
12. Ali Smith, *Autumn* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2016).
13. Olga Tokarczuk, *Flights*, trans. Jennifer Croft (London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2017).
14. Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 57–60.
15. Helen Marten, quoted in Oliver Basciano, "Helen Marten: The Thoughtful Tactility of Things," *ArtReview*, October 2016.
16. Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, (London: Ignota, 2019).
17. Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2013), 31.
18. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).
19. Maggie Nelson, *On Freedom: Four Songs of Care and Constraint* (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2021), 87.
20. Elizabeth Grosz, *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics and Art* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 51.
21. Magali Reus, *Hot Cottons* (London: Sternberg Press, 2018).
22. Alsa Ojala, "On Lina Herrmans' Non-Holdings," exhibition text, 2025.
23. Ali Smith, *Artful* (London: Penguin Books, 2013).
Ali Smith, *How to Be Both* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2014).
24. Susie Scott, *The Social Life of Nothing: Silence, Invisibility and Emptiness in Tales of Lost Experience* (New York: Routledge, 2019).
25. Nina Canell, *Nina Canell: Mid-Sentence*, ed. Fionn Meade (Berlin: Spector Books, 2020).
26. Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: SAGE, 2005), 9.
27. Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, (London: Ignota, 2019).
28. Alsa Ojala, *On Lina Herrmans' body of work*, exhibition text for Non-Holdings, 2025.
29. Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1910).
30. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 2012).
31. *Ibid.*
32. Maggie Nelson, *Bluets* (Seattle: Wave Books, 2009).
33. Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 25–40.
34. Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, (London: Ignota, 2019); Ali Smith, *How to Be Both* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2014).
35. Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman: Life beyond the Human Condition* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 1–20.
36. Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, (London: Ignota, 2019).
37. Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).
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