

THE WALLS ART SPACE

MARI HIRATA

FRAGMENTS OF AN INTERNAL LANDSCAPE: STUDIES AND MAKINGS

8 - 23 MARCH, 2020

[Clockwise from entrance]

FRAGMENT 1

Brass, stainless steel
Dimensions variable

FRAGMENT 2

Brass, wood, acrylic paint, stainless steel
Dimensions variable

FRAGMENT 3

Brass, copper, wood, plastic, enamel paint
L 19cm x W 22cm x H 84cm

FRAGMENT 4

Pencil, brass, copper, mirrors, steel
Dimensions variable

FRAGMENT 5

Copper, acrylic, mirror
L 30cm x W 30cm x H 12cm

FRAGMENT 6

Pencil, brass, copper, wood
Dimensions variable

FRAGMENT 7

Copper, steel
Dimensions variable

FRAGMENT 8

Brass, copper, mirror, steel
Dimensions variable

FRAGMENT 9

Brass, steel, mirror, motor
Dimensions variable

FRAGMENT 10

Brass, stainless steel
Diameter 40mm, Depth 22mm

FRAGMENT 11

Brass, black glass
Dimensions variable

FRAGMENT 12

Copper
L12cm x W 13.5cm

FRAGMENT 13

Pencil, paper
20.5 cm x 15cm

FRAGMENT 14

Steel, wood, foil, enamel paint, paint, plastic,
motor
Dimensions variable

Fragments of an Internal Landscape: Studies and Makings, presents a series of hand fabricated metal objects created by artist Mari Hirata for a site-specific installation at The Walls Art Space. With an established visual arts practice incorporating photography, sculpture, installation, and silversmithing, Hirata began working on this exhibition during the COVID-19 lockdown period. A two-week on-site residency during early August provided the rare opportunity for the artist to spend time within the space, an integral component to the realisation of this meticulously conceived and installed series of 'fragments'.

To fragment is *to break something or be broken into small separate parts*. What began as an artist's block in the early stages of COVID-19 restrictions, slowly allowed for the reassembly of these disparate parts, as the artist sought to draw meaning and beauty from this particular moment in time. A collection of drawings by Hirata served as a catalyst for a necessary and productive time in the

studio. As an attempt to express in visual imagery what words cannot easily relay, the artist reflects on the difficult, often uncomfortable emotions we may have all experienced during prolonged periods of isolation and uncertainty. The restrictions and break from regular routine, lead the artist through a period of deep contemplation, allowing for time to reconsider an earlier seminal residency at Bundanon Trust in 2018, her approaches to making, and fundamentally to notions of the self during times of crisis.

Over a period of six months, the artist amassed a collection of hand fabricated small sculptures, initially created in her studio in East Brisbane, with additional pieces added to the exhibition on site at the space in Miami. During the two-week gallery residency, a series of open studio days were held. Visitors popped in to view the progress of the show, to share conversations about the works and Hirata's process as she continued working in the space, with a makeshift standing bench and tools.

A suite of small drawings welcomes the viewer into the space, reflections on the inner workings of the artist. Meticulously placed forms line the walls. Some floating off towards the ceiling or slowly floating back down to earth. Miniature worlds appear, as mini installations on custom built plinths, and suspended from the ceiling, inviting the viewer to walk in the round, exploring the concrete floors, corners, and crevices. Suspended organic forms, forged in brass and copper, punctuate the gallery walls. The elemental nature of the objects takes on an almost ethereal glow with the warm afternoon sunlight cast through the open doors of the gallery space. A copper vessel casts a pink halo onto its custom-built shelf as it floats in mid-air against the white backdrop of the gallery wall.

Unexpected conversations occur between these small objects, miniature ladders to nowhere, molten forms defying gravity, and lumpy melted pools on the ground. A chain fixed to a small metal rod punctures a bulbous form, drawing the eye to an invisible link between the fragments. Some forms are recognisable from the drawings, others are new additions to the existing language of signs, symbols, and omens the artist has woven into the story. The appearance of an androgynous figure sitting crouched amongst the sculptural forms catches the intent viewers eye, trapped in a cage like protrusion from the wall.

A suspended, imperceptibly slowly rotating flower hand fabricated in brass, held seemingly by the barest of thin wires, threatens to come crashing down towards a mirror. The flower, pulled to earth by gravity, seems to be fraying with the ungainly weight of worldly worries, perhaps the artist alluding to the fine line between being frayed at the seams and coming undone completely one thread at a time.

Hirata has invoked a gathering space with this show. A focal point for fragments to coalesce, remnants to come together, sparingly situating discrete collections of objects together as unfolding vignettes, highlighting her ability to refine and home in on visual puns, allegoric connections and the tight friction between darkness and light. In honouring the pain and fragmented chaos of our time, Hirata ushers in contemplation time, welcoming difficult conversations, and exchanges within the gallery space, for those seeking to explore emotional and philosophical musings.

— Mandana Mapar, 2020

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THE WALLS is supported by the City of Gold Coast.

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THE WALLS acknowledge the YUGAMBEH people, the traditional owners of the land on which we operate, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on the Gold Coast today.