

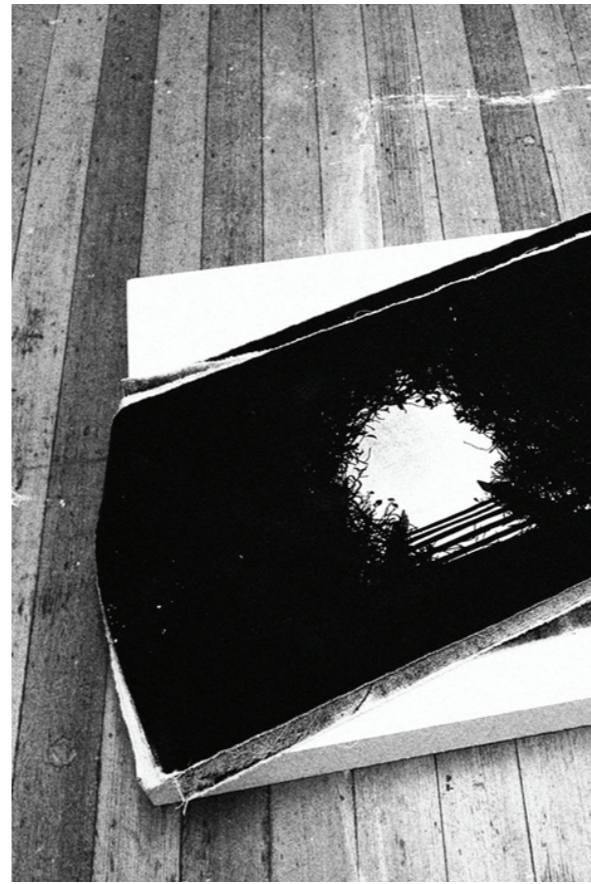
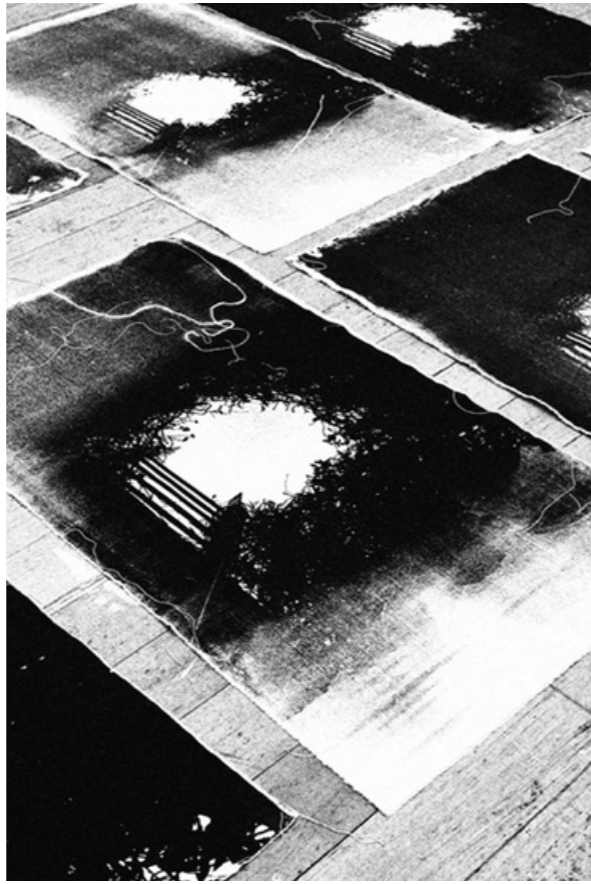
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Curated by Stella Eaton.

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Meg Kelso
Lexi Picciani
Mellyn Sun
Tuesday Wilson
Justine Walsh



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I acknowledge that this exhibition took place on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong/Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation.

I pay my respects to their Elders past and present and any First Nations people who visited this space.

Their traditions of yarning and creative practice have taken place on this land for over 60 000 years.

I acknowledge my position to this land as an uninvited guest who inhabits their Country as a product of colonisation.

This always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

storytelling

Curated and written by Stella Eaton

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Storytelling explores the capacity for art objects to reveal aspects of their creator's identity.

The artists in this exhibition tell stories inspired by memory, the body and the materials they work with. By comparing five diverse artistic practices, this exhibition considers artworks to represent an embodied form of narrative devices. The five artists included within this show share an affinity for storytelling through artistic practice, expressed across first and third-person narratives.

This exhibition is designed to be an unguided experience with no overt explanation of the stories behind the artworks. The intention is to encourage interpretations based on the audience's instinctive reactions to works. By leaving these narratives unspoken, the stories that influence each work become retold by each new observer. To best engage with the exhibition, we encourage you to interact with the space. We recommend to sit down, listen carefully and take time to participate in the stories on display.

Lexi Picciani, Meg Kelso, Mellyn Sun, Justine Walsh and Tuesday Wilson are all Naarm-based artists studying under

the MADA faculty. Lexi is a printmaker, conceptualising her works through the labour-intensive process of copper photo etching. Giving herself over to the repetitive process of printmaking, her prints weave a story of her artistic process, bearing the marks of her body's labour.

Meg's prints and glass sculpture act in tandem, allowing viewers to view her prints through the distorted lens of the glass plate. This pairing considers the ability for materials to withhold memory relevant to the print's subject matter of a photograph taken in Papua New Guinea, where Meg grew up.

Mellyn's installation considers the way food can bridge generational gaps. Her painting is backed against curtains, with a table and cushions for audiences to contemplate her connection to her late grandparents and the oral history they passed down.

Justine's limestone carving, sound work and wood installation are connected by the body's response to these materials.

Across carved limestone, sound and the smell of camphor wood, these works create a sanctuary and form a dialogue across their sensory properties.

Tuesday's photographs capture a dancer in motion, focusing on the way movement communicates identity. By celebrating the visceral joy of dance, this series incorporates portraiture as part of Tuesday's ongoing interest in learning from others.

Through artistic interpretation of memory, the body and materiality, this exhibition showcases art objects as products of storytelling. By mediating these stories through art, these artists imbed a part of themselves within the artworks they produce, revealed across first and third-person perspectives.





The Presence of the Narrator in Storytelling

This project emerged from a series of conversations with the artists about their respective practices. By positioning themselves as storytellers, they bring subjective experiences into physical existence. Following the basic principle that all artmaking constitutes a form of storytelling, the question remains, how do we make sense of these stories?

This exhibition progressed into an investigation of how perspective can influence artistic meaning, interrogating the overlap between written narratives and art objects. This was driven by Pauline de Souza's essay, "Destruction/Reconstruction of the Artist/Art Object: What is Possible?" This text pivotally related to this project by pinpointing the existence of first-person and third-person forms of narration in visual art. De Souza recognises this through the presence or absence of an artist's body. Once the artist's body is present within a given work, de Souza considers this a first-person perspective, in which the artwork is narrated through the artist's embodied knowledge. A third-person perspective is defined as artworks that narrate the stories of other people, destabilising the conventional association between an artist and their work.

When applied to the context of Storytelling, first or third-person perspectives are not explicitly visible. Given that self-portraiture is absent from this exhibition, first and third-person perspectives are witnessed through artists' relationships to the stories they depict. Principally, first-person perspectives are identified through works that invoke the artist's body or memories to create meaning, such as artworks by Meg Kelso, Lexi Picciani and Justine Walsh. Alternatively, works that narrate the experiences of others represent a third-person narration, demonstrated across the work of Mellyn Sun and Tuesday Wilson. Across these works, artists wield first or third-person perspectives to reevaluate the boundaries between narrator and audience. Consequently, these artists explore the capacity for perspective to affect the ways audiences relate to artworks on display.

By interrogating artworks from the position of narrative devices, this exhibition is a response to the notion of identity being indivisible from artistic practice. Against the assumption that artworks are inherently autobiographical, the artists in this exhibition recognise the overlapping presence of memory, the body and material-led practice. As storytellers, these artists transform their lived experiences into material form, enabling their narratives to exist outside themselves. Across this exhibition, artists selectively collapse the boundaries between self and the 'other.' Through first-person narratives, artists encourage viewers to see through their eyes, blurring the distinction between narrator and audience. Conversely, third-person perspectives express narratives separate to the artists' experiences, reflecting on their identity through the experiences of others. Accordingly, *Storytelling* explores the capacity for artworks to act as a physical continuation of written narrative devices, resulting in a productive dialogue between the artworks on display.

In this publication, first and third-person perspectives are progressed through visual analysis. Considering curatorial writing as a third-person exercise, the curator's visual analysis is contrasted against artists' first-person testimonies, using first-person quotes to encourage a comparison between these perspectives.

Meg Kelso
(She/Her)

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Meg Kelso's series of prints *Portal Gesture #1-8* and accompanying hanging glass plate *I can't see So I might*, explore the way materials act as containers of memory.

The series of prints shown in *Portal Gesture* contains the same image repeated in various saturations. These prints depict an image of stairs leading up to a bright opening, with a portal-like clearing created through a gap in the tree canopy overhanging this scene. Within this piece, Meg focuses on the ability for an image's saturation to affect its interpretation. The image's subject matter is taken from a photograph of Papua New Guinea, where Meg was raised. While her early life was filled with imagery like that of this work, her adulthood has navigated an increasingly hazy relationship to these recollections. In referencing imagery linked to her childhood, this series corresponds to Meg's investigation into the material properties of memory. By pinpointing a site of personal significance, her prints replicate the intangible experience of visualising a memory. Across this series, the image appears varyingly saturated. Some prints appear hyper-saturated while others offer faded, less concrete representations of the image. By alternating the prints' saturation, Meg collapses the bounds between artist and viewer, placing them in the shoes of an ex-patriate dreaming of home.

Much like *Portal Gesture* appeals to the ability for materials to embody memory, the glass sculpture *I can't see So I might* further mirrors the artist's lived experiences. This glass plate is suspended before *Portal Gesture*, condensing both works into a singular experience. This piece is composed of kiln-formed reclaimed glass fruit and ash. Meg sourced these materials from the remnants of past projects, scraped off the kiln's doors and refired to form a composite whole. Placed at eye-level with the spectator, this sculpture forms a lens of sorts. Once looked through, this work distorts the print behind it, warping the appearance of the work beyond recognition. Referencing the function of lenses as corrective tools, this artistic intervention implores audiences to regard the works on display as inherently flawed. That is, Meg aims to dispel the notion that her work acts as a true translation of memory, rather, attests to its changeable and inconstant nature. In this sense, Meg's materials enact a first-person narrative by reflecting on the intangible fabric of memory.



Meg Kelso, *I can't see So I might*, 2025, kiln-formed reclaimed glass fruit, ash, 23 x 37cm
and Meg Kelso, *Portal Gesture #1-3*, 2025, ink on unstretched canvas, 100 x 57cm



“So for me a lot of the context of the work feeds into the making a lot. There’s a lot of material memory that is present, especially with the prints, because prints in their essence are a product of a multiple. The way I see it is that a lot of my research has been around pre-memory and your formative years when you’re younger and how memory works in terms of ike, you never really remember something truly as it was ... You may try to recreate the thing but it’s never going to be true to what actually happened. I see it as a fantasy in a way, of like nothing is ever really as it seems.”

“Glass as a process is also using your body and doing these processes, but the nature of glass is so fragile and malleable. Once it goes in the kiln, it’s out of my control ... There’s this unknown: will it survive, will it melt or form into another shape? It’s all reclaimed and I purposefully haven’t cleaned it, so it has bits of ash and things that have been caught after being left out. It’s kind of like a foggy window to look into.”

Lexi Picciani
(She/Her)

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Lexi Picciani's Untitled print and copper plates speak to the immanent presence of her body's labour within her printmaking practice.

Lexi's practice is process-based, with much of her work's conceptual meaning formed through the repetitive process of copper photo etching. For Lexi, understanding the history of her craft has deeply informed the way she approaches the medium. When beginning a print, Lexi carefully researches the materials she engages with, particularly interested in how the technique of etching has evolved over time.

Lexi's work incorporates photographs, first dissected into their CMYK colour equivalents, then precisely rendered through dots. She begins many of her works by first fragmenting the original image, digitally deconstructing it, one layer at a time. Once each layer has been separated, the laborious process of printmaking begins. Copper photo etching is a repetitive process, requiring silicone transfer sheets to be adhered to individual copper sheets, each representing a different layer of colour to the final print. Each of these sheets must then be chemically eroded to allow the ink to correctly sit in each plate. Through this process, the work's meaning evolves through the laborious process of etching, layering and printing each individual sheet. For Lexi, her works express a unique form of storytelling inherently linked to the body and the presence of the artist's hand.

Untitled takes its subject matter from a photograph Lexi took during a semester studying abroad in Prato, Italy. Depicting the grandeur of a Renaissance church's interior, the choice of subject matter alludes to Lexi's interest in the historical narratives behind copper etching. Namely, it is believed that the historical switch to incorporating copper plates in the etching process was pioneered in Italy. However, Lexi insists her subject matter is not relevant to the overarching meaning of her work. Rather, it is the process behind their creation that imbues her works with conceptual significance. When looking at Lexi's print and accompanying copper plates, this detail-oriented process is immediately apparent. The combined impact of spectacular Renaissance architecture with the skilled application of copper etching entreats audiences to assess the works as implicitly connected to the artist's labour. Through hours of repetitive printing and reconstructing the image layer by layer, this work withholds traces of the artist's hand, attesting to the impact of the body on the final print. The implicit presence of Lexi's labour invites the audience to regard these artworks from a first-person perspective.



Lexi Picciani, Untitled, 2025, 16 copper plates, 19.5 x 26cm

Mellyn Sun
(She/Her)

Mellyn Sun's painting 来坐吧 (Have a Seat) immerses the audience in a scene inspired by family history, offering her audience a seat at the table.

This painting is accompanied by an installation, complete with lace curtains, a dining table, cushions and a recipe book. The painting depicts a table laid with dishes from Mellyn's family history. This work's subject matter emerged from the generational disconnect between Mellyn and her late paternal grandparents. While never having met them personally, their influence remains palpable in Mellyn's domestic life through the recipes they passed down orally to her father. As referenced by the Shanghainese recipe book in the installation, the meals featured in this painting are one of the only tangible connections Mellyn holds to her late grandparents. Through the act of preparing meals, these recipes reflect the cross-generational tradition of gathering to share food. Much as these meals were transcribed through oral history, Mellyn's intervention into this lineage belies the subtle differentiations that emerge as a recipe is passed on and recreated. In doing so, Mellyn's painting represents her unfolding legacy as the most recent generation in her family. Through this act of remembrance, Mellyn is attentive to the influences upon her identity, even subconsciously absorbed through food.

Mellyn has organised an installation to involve the audience within the work, directing the viewer to take a seat before this work. While dealing with food as a symbol immanent to her own personal experiences, her reflection on generational history relates this narrative to a third-person perspective. That is, the context of its display presents the work as a product of interpersonal connection rather than Mellyn's subjective experiences. By staging the installation to mimic a domestic interior, these interpersonal connections are progressed into the gallery space through audience engagement. Once inviting visitors to sit down and connect, this work transgresses upon typical gallery conventions, where the unspoken rule is to "look, but don't touch." This installation amplifies the context of Mellyn's subject matter, encouraging a sense of comfort and invitation to pervade the gallery space. By inviting the viewer into the private realm of a family dinner, the viewer becomes a guest at her feast.



Image: Installation of Sun's 来坐吧 (Have a Seat)



Justine Walsh's Chodladh and I, could be a constellation transform the artist's reckonings with remembrance and protection into a physical plane.

Justine's practice explores the ability for art objects to act as traces of embodied knowledge. In the case of *Chodladh*, the body's presence is both seen and felt across a limestone carving and accompanying sound work. Designed to be experienced in proximity, this work appeals to the combined effect of engaging multiple senses at once. The limestone sculpture was prompted by a visit to Krakow, a site previously occupied by Justine's Jewish ancestors. This work replicates architectural ruins found on this trip, imagined as a site that bridged Justine to generations past. Envisioning the limestone as a fossil of sorts, their intuitive carving mined the stone to uncover the final work. Introducing this piece with an accompanying sound piece welcomes audiences to this installation. The sound work is a lullaby of sorts, greeting the audience with a dense blend of environmental and vocal sounds. By intimately connecting a lullaby sung in Gaeilge to the limestone, Justine offers these works as a pair of corresponding artefacts. These materials echo against each other, haloing the limestone in vibration, gently washing over the sculpture's surface in a nod to the processes of washing the stone during carving. By centring the body within this work, these sensory triggers blur the distinction between artist and audience perspectives. This work accordingly promotes a first-person perspective, positioning the viewer to see through the artist's eyes.

I, could be a constellation is an installation composed of camphor wood stakes stuck into the gallery walls. Much like *Chodladh*, this work was conceived out of the sensory properties of camphor wood, which produces a crisp menthol scent when carved. By piercing the gallery walls with their pointed tips, these stakes puncture the university institution from within. Justine understands these objects to hold twofold meaning. The stakes are inherently protective devices, able to be wielded as defensive tools against potential threats. Hailing to cult horror classics such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Justine reflects upon the wooden stake as an empowering object used to ward off negative energy. Parallel to the protective instinct the stake recalls, by penetrating the gallery this work challenges the institution as a site of artistic censorship. In the wake of the cancellation of Stolon Press's exhibition at MUMA, Justine sought to mitigate their relationship to Monash University as a student within this institution. By inserting these stakes into the walls of Intermission Gallery, Justine's work pierces the outer membrane that makes up the institution. Given that architecture represents the superficial exterior of the institution, this work issues both a challenge and an empathetic appeal for healing, like acupuncture. As a narrator, Justine's work anticipates the audience as an extension of the self. Through these works, Justine guides the viewer through embodied experiences, instinctively driven by the audience's sensitivity to the works on display.



Justine Walsh, Chodladh, 2025, limestone and sound, 27 x 45 x 23cm and Justine Walsh, I, could be a constellation, 2025, camphor wood, variable dimensions, approximately 15-20cm x 2cm each

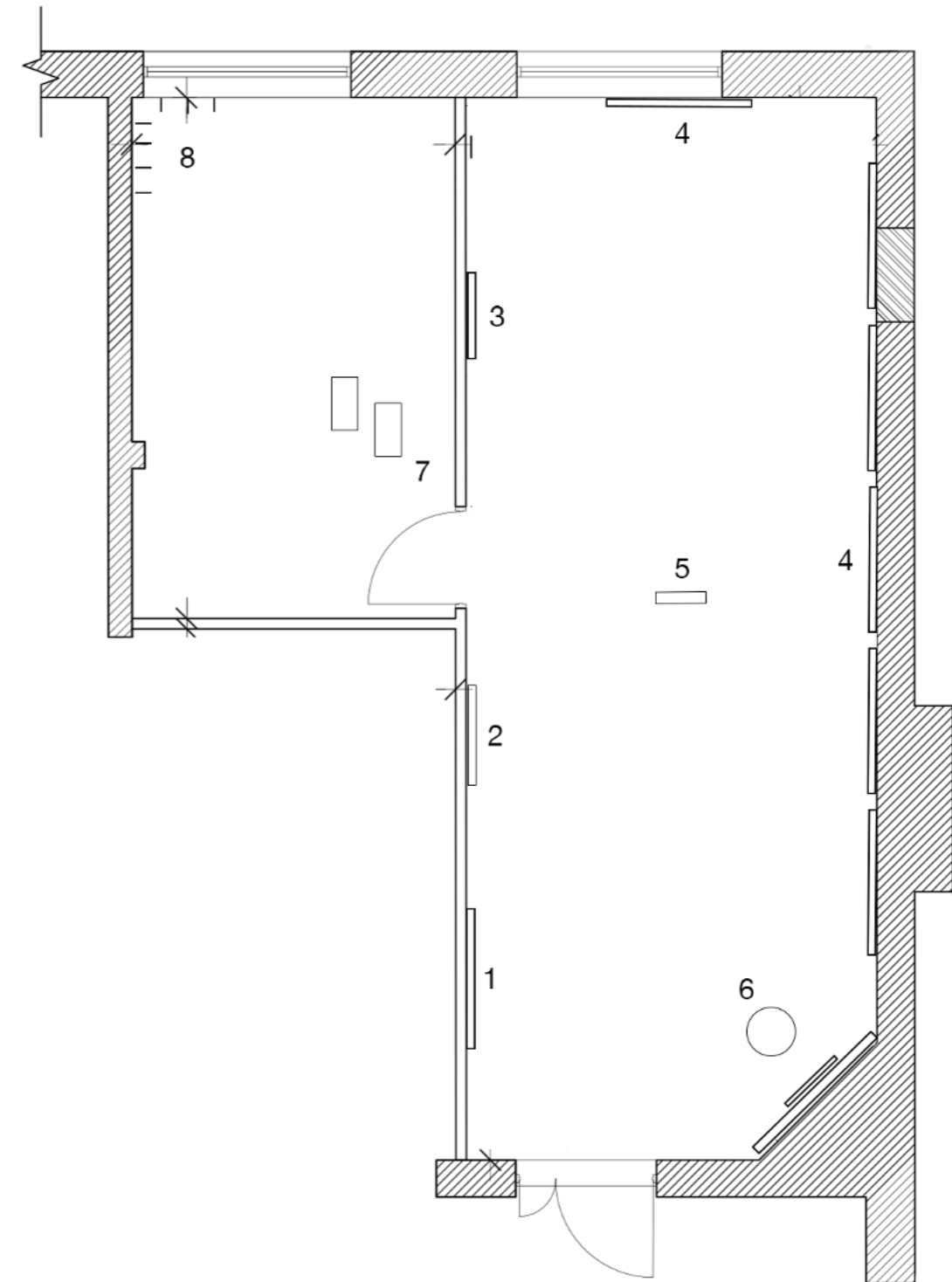
“I mean the process of carving it was like prayer almost. I was washing and soaking the stone and touching it and carving out these architectural details from this pillar that I saw in the south of Poland. It’s like embodying memory, I guess, because it was me embodying the memory of seeing the stone ... I had this feeling that it was very possible that my ancestors saw these stones and walked past them ... I carve everything by hand as well, so I don’t know, it’s like being in communion with something bigger than me, something so much older than I am ... It’s got the sound work with it too, it’s kind of me singing to the stone, it’s kind of the stone singing back. The curves of the stone and the deep earth are sort of a listening ear ... It’s a lullaby that I’m singing and some fragments of other songs, some improvised, some remembered, there’s humming and some field recordings and some spatial sounds like water dripping ... It sounds like spiralling down through time”.





“Camphor has sort of this bright menthol smell, it’s really clarifying and clear. You breathe better and when I carve the camphor wood it smells so strong and it’s calming, refreshing and in the process of whittling is this reductive process of removing material to reveal a form, but with this work, these objects were sort of ritual tools ... I was thinking about acupuncture, the pinpoint, about Buffy the Vampire Slayer ... I was transmuting this process of feeling gross and raw, and like I needed protection or something to hold me ... Just this action of making these objects was processing something in me that felt under threat. When I was doing this install I was like, there’s like some kind of acupuncture on an institution, or on a building, this is the architecture that holds all of this ... it’s a membrane, a skin between us and bureaucracy. But we can still sense that there are these pressure points or intensities, but maybe if we put a little point in there, maybe it will relieve some of this pressure or maybe it will heal something”.

Exhibition Floorplan



1. Lexi Picciani, *Untitled*, 2025, 16 copper plates, 19.5 x 26cm
2. Lexi Picciani, *Untitled*, 2025, copper photo etching, ink, paper, wood, 63.5 x 96cm
3. Tuesday Wilson, *Dance*, 2025, printmaking paper, eucalyptus image transfer, ink, 71cm x 25cm
4. Meg Kelso, *Portal Gesture #1-8*, 2025, ink on unstretched canvas, 100 x 57cm
5. Meg Kelso, *I can't see So I might*, 2025, kiln-formed reclaimed glass fruit, ash, 23 x 37cm
6. Mellyn Sun, *来坐吧 (Have a Seat)*, 2025, acrylic on mdf board, 66 x 52cm
7. Justine Walsh, *Chodladh*, 2025, limestone and sound, 27 x 45 x 23cm
8. Justine Walsh, *I, could be a constellation*, 2025, camphor wood, variable dimensions, approximately 15-20cm x 2cm each

