

homecoming queen

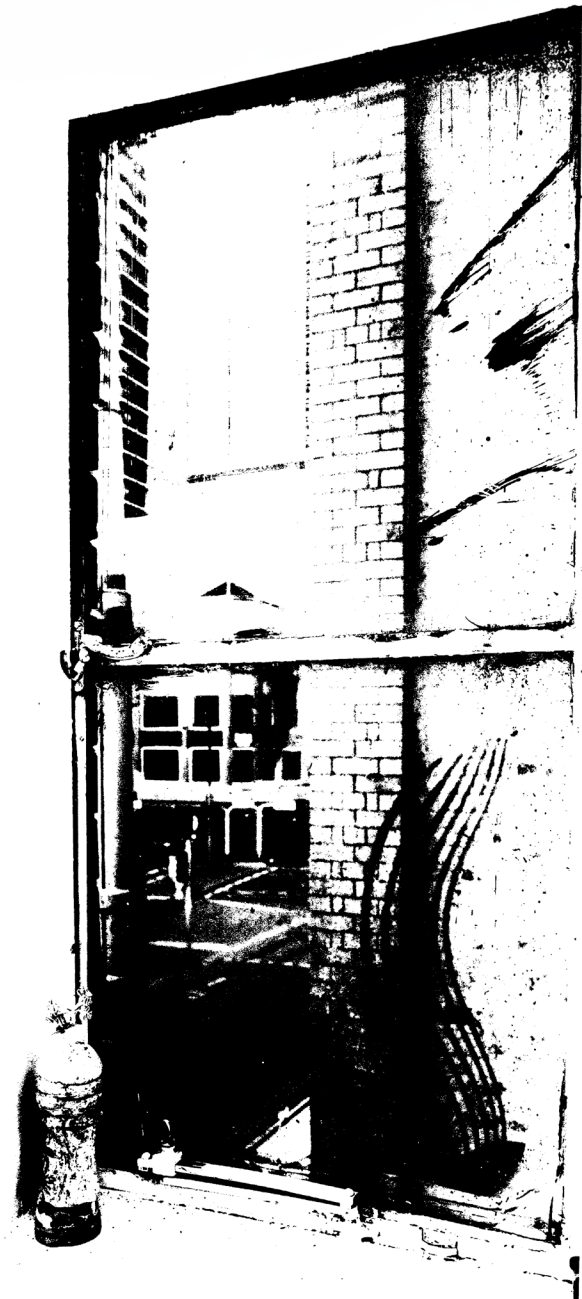


schmick contemporary
schmickcontemporary@gmail.com

level 2, 706 George Street, Chinatown, unceded Gadigal Land

a r t i s t i s
fergus ber-
ney-gibson
alice martin
sadie whelan

curated by
annabelle
mcween



A room is a world with a door to another.
And you have built this house place up, crinoline
thing.

It was night time or it was summer on the back
step or it was feeling pearl buttons carving round
red against the spine while you waited for the car
with its big white eyes to take you to your new
life.

In the grass below the porch steps, the night gets
longer and further away and there is something
small spinning with all ten legs dancing like you
know you won't.

Behind you, the screen door sighing on his tired
hinge, his skin of holes. You have held that han-
dle one hundred days. Arm raise claw press down
push and greet the breath inside. [It still smells
the same. Something waxy saccharine, dog piss.
It's stronger since you left.]

You have moved that door with smaller hands
than these that now wait folded in your lacy lap.

How could you hold it all back then? How, even
now?

All those days ago, then. You were that small something glowing spin-
ning like a soft globe
with blue oceans. You could walk with your eyes closed the whole way if you
wanted to.

When you would leave in the morningtime, there were so many wishes waving

Goodbye to you all, again! You would say.
After all your daylight troubles, return. And again
The way home through
The evening arches of
Their fine green necks standing
Bare,
Having been taken by the wind and
The day's slow hunger.

And still, it is dark inside your pink curl shell. You can hear the wind burn cold
on the warm tooth of it.

It will hold you with every thing, all the outside bones.

So glisten on the stoop, you bright burning bead, droplet on corner eyelash. You
have not made it down the first tender step, its belly bowed from years of your
own trudging feet. Await the car and the sash and the pin prick flower, listen to
the air sizzling above the black road, spelling the words:

Wait All You Want, You Are Here And It Is Not Coming For You.

Meanwhile, in that great hall where you are not, there are slow dancers dizzy.
Bodies snap against sound or drunk with light or this night could go for ever like
a plastic crown.

Something could happen any second now.

But all you see before you are the red lights leaving.

Come inside, says the window from behind your cap sleeve shoulder.
Now is time to eat.

I am passing

You the spoon to press against your lips and teeth and it is smooth or it is wood
or it is hot from the bowl or my hand on the shy stem now eat, eat.

CARAPACE

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The day I heard the news, I had a meeting with a gallery — who, unrelatedly — were [REDACTED] cooking a salmon meal. It was [REDACTED] they had held the night before. As we discussed [REDACTED] — I ate the real-yet-prop salmon they offered — presented practically ([REDACTED]) and could think of nothing but each Christmas I had spent with him as a child, and that we had never “[REDACTED]” as he had offered. The salmon was saline, and fatty, and lukewarm.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] the pageantry [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] smelt of nothing [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Deprived of a formal wake, the post-funeral party consisted of [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] By my second round of Canapè passing, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] my hold on the silver tray weakened. I held the tray of crab cakes (slathered

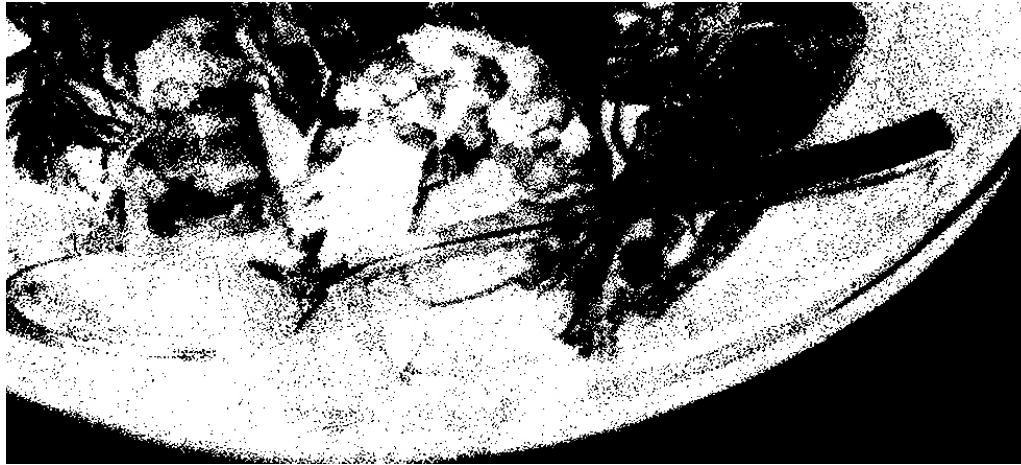
in warm mayonnaise) to a group of identifiably heterosexual men in their fifties. The third stopped, and reached out a hand to shake mine. I awkwardly shuffled the tray to my left hand, and ensured my handshake was firm. He introduced himself expectantly; “[REDACTED]” He was, ostensibly, my uncle. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I mumbled that it was nice to meet him, and walked off. I placed the increasingly oily and hot tray on a trestle table — next to [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I was a quiet, and wonderfully faggy child — [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] My parents served, [REDACTED], a raw sea-food Christmas lunch — prawns in shell — saline and chalky. I reached a limp wrist to the overly-patterned bowl of prawns, and begun to attack them — pulling at each side with little grace. Boney grubby hands — bluntly splitting the cinnabar shells from the warm flesh — strands of cloacal waste, pulled down the soft mottled spine; spongy. Salted goat butter and thickened fatty creams spooned upon. My father’s brother-in-law (nicknamed ‘the phantom’ by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who spoke predominantly in riddles, and to no-one in particular) looked at me directly and spoke for the first time; “[REDACTED]” [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and still, it is the only thing he has ever said to me. Shamed by my gauche attempt; I retreated to the bodies in front of me. Thick roach-like shells, minute legs curled together like a dying line graph. Red shells. White, sinewy meat, overly salted. Egg yolk aioli, cream, and everything to drown the black eye stalks.

Fergus Berney-Gibson's work delves into themes of memory, presence, connection, and identity explored through printmaking techniques that combine manual and digital processes. This is achieved through the collation and re-contextualisation of images and text. In this case, using solvents to transfer scanned film negatives obtained from the artist's Grandfather's archive onto animal skins—resulting in a final image that embodies the retention



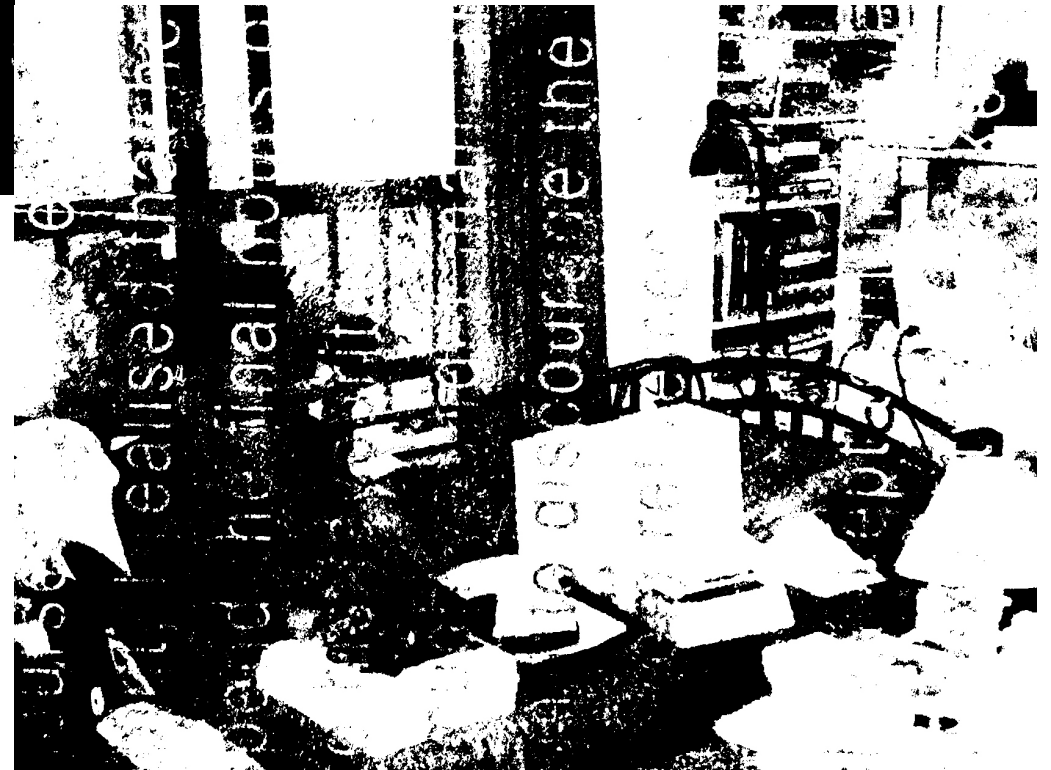
of a memory. His process transforms these archival snapshots into obscured reproductions of the originals, capturing the ephemeral nature of personal and collective memory.

The use of animal skins as a surface evokes themes of the skin and body, also hinting at elements of kink and eroticism. The process of using solvents to transfer images leads to the emergence of low-quality yet romantically floaty reproductions, reflecting themes of embodiment and memory—similar to the elusive feeling of memory recall. This can also be seen to represent the complex interplay between physical and emotional experiences and the challenge of seeking intimacy while maintaining self-preservation. The use of leather in combination with the degraded quality of the transferred

images illustrates the struggle between closeness and distance reflecting the tension between connection and vulnerability. The merging of manual and digital aspects, accompanied by the utilisation of inherited imagery represents the negotiation between personal and inherited narratives. The domestic scenes portrayed in the work suggest a sense of nostalgia and childhood, the work bridges the artist's personal history with universal themes of family, queerness, the patriarchy, memory, and our understanding of self and connection.

By merging physical practices with digital and archival processes Berney-Gibson's work not only reflects the complexity of personal and collective history but also engages with deeper themes of intimacy, connection, and the marks we leave on each other.

Katerina Chellos



Mantel, Piece

When I come to Schmick show openings the room is always full. In the crowd I am up close to the space. Up close to a wall, a window, the door or the fireplace. The familiar decorative details remind me of the year I was 7. Of the first bedroom I had to myself and the first room when I moved here. A time in which I discovered an appreciation for things we can hold onto. Sacred and special because of the memories they contain. What surrounded me shapes my memory. A familiar place, an attachment of sentiment. I piece together and form from this.

I would display my treasures on the fireplace mantel in my room. Although I don't remember the items well now, I remember the fireplace. Or at least I think I do. In my memory it is white and has a dark metal grate I would fill with pinecones. I pretended the pinecones were burning the fire, heating the room, the chimney billowing smoke. I picked them off the dirt floor of Centennial Park. When I am there in the pine forest now I can feel the pace of that time too. I am still slowly scanning the floor investigating, in search of the perfect pinecone. An excited and nervous explorer and collector.

I remember I had a decorative ceiling, not unlike the one at Schmick. I would stare up at its height from my bed when I was bored and try to count the patterned dots and flowers. Inevitably getting lost in the repetitions of white marks. I

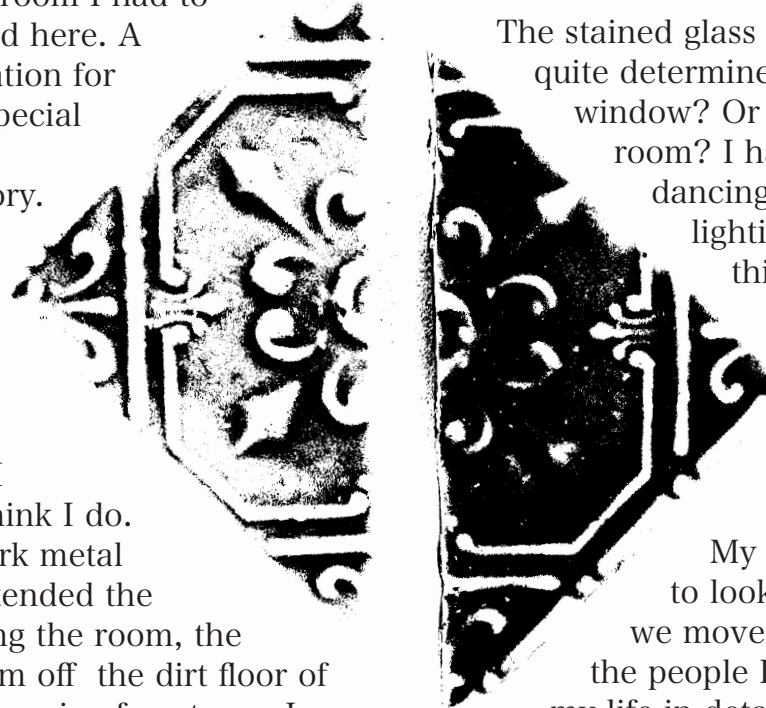
would start over again. The inertia of a day, a room that is my own, my own treasured items within. Decorative elements, cracks and intricacies, an appreciated reminder of other's time. An imperfect room is a lived-in space.

The stained glass above my door is something I can't quite determine. Was it above my door or on my window? Or was it above the door in my sister's room? I have a lovely image of the colours dancing across the cream carpet. Sun rays lighting it up. Perhaps a construction of things I have seen since. I like to think it's true. What I know for fact is behind the door was a long hallway. I couldn't see through the window of course, but that was a door I had walked through.

My room wouldn't have been that special to look at, or unique from any other but when we moved I was sad to go. It held me and it held the people I love for a time. I can't fully remember my life in detail, so this time is shaped by images of the things I spent the most time with. When I am in a room now I think of what and who it has held before me. Moments forgotten. Memories mantled.

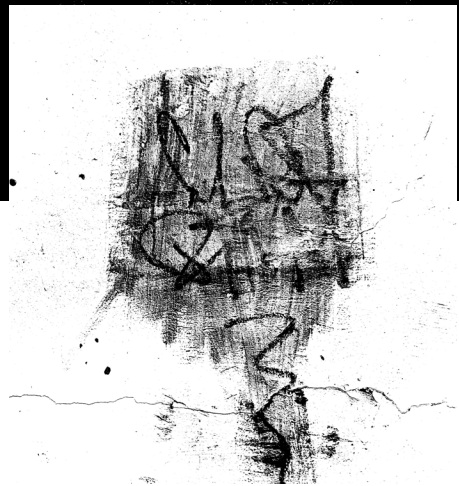
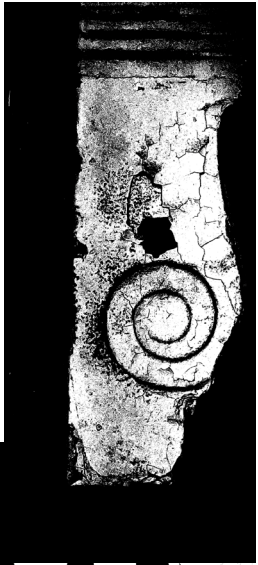
A fireplace, a window and a ceiling.

Alice Martin



...提高...
...受益不淺...
...信、腰、...
...學...
...傳身教...
...法...
...大增強...
...能勞傷...
...重骨傷...

丁, 肩...
...要椎...
...影、脫...
...果關...
...固...



ASPIRE

The waxen memories of Eora artist Alice Martin's work are pliable investigations of an echoed construction of our pasts. It's intimate - a realisation of domesticity frozen in wax impressions, strained under white lights in the gallery cube. An instant ageing to forgotten corners, the wax becomes a shield between object and viewer, encasing scribbles on a desk or wallpaper fraying within the bottom of a drawer. It forces introspection into a wax impression, a frame now filled with a pure definition of ephemerality.

The work itself transforms Schmick into a memory; a fireplace, a window and a ceiling effortlessly blend and adapt into wax - replicated only through the artist's own connection. Martin speaks to the work as a reflection on the energy of a room, "what and who it had held before me". I wonder what psychometry pulls Martin to cast the ceiling tiles, the window or the fireplace - is it the stories they hold of the past, or the stories they conjure of Martin's past? It sits outside of what the piece copies, the wax yellowed, seemingly decaying like the old memories Martin aims to display. The organic casting flails around the subject matter, the wax mantle piece unable to sit straight across - a reflection that these regurgitated recollections are themselves imperfect representations of what we think we know. Finally, Martin displays fragments of the wax casted ceiling tiles of the space. The details of the ornamental ceiling are allowed to gain depth from the stark white of the original. Broken in half to show the tessellating patterns, one pair sits evenly against the wall and another as if they had fallen from the ceiling above.

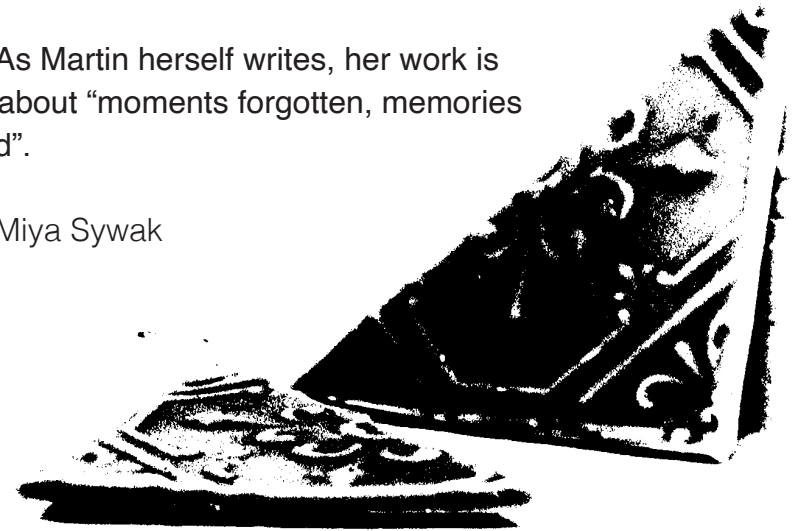
Martin complicates memory; strong elements of design forever practical now being reduced to a flimsy recollection, seemingly able to melt away at any moment. The wax envelops the object, becoming a film that fogs the once strong nostalgia

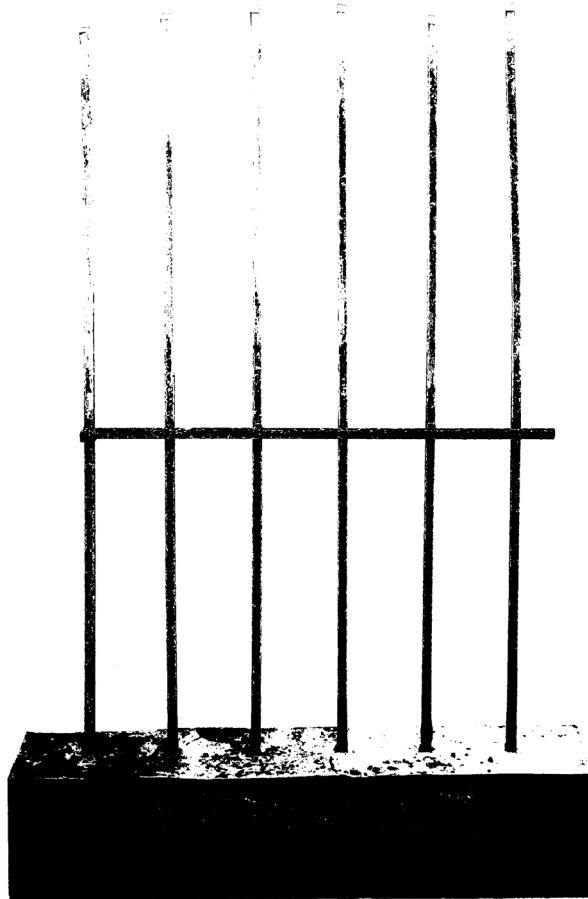
into an uneven sheen. It opens up discussion on a sense of self created through one's movement, a connection between the acoustics of optics being action and touch. I imagine myself gliding my hand over the raw joints and varnished wood, picking up dents and patches of wax, feeling it soften underneath my fingertips. It's soothing, yet this relationship between me, memory and this object only exists through Martin's work.

It's about tracking oneself through objects, and uncovering layers of a collective sentimentality. I find it interesting, a shared memory brought up by pieces of doors, mid century drawers and waxed frames. Has Martin found the baseline to a shared nostalgia? When we collect things, we use objects to evaluate ourselves - piecing together remembered biographies through wardrobes and bedside tables. The axis, a suppressed representation of the world around us made easier to digest through common objects. There's nothing extraordinary about the found raw materials Martin builds upon, it's the fragmentation, meaning created through replication and freezing these objects and thus memories in time.

As Martin herself writes, her work is simply about "moments forgotten, memories mantled".

Miya Sywak





To attempt to understand something that is not yet known...

The order/disorder of an object reflects a system in itself, a motif that reveals something sitting below the surface.

Is it a feeling of something unknown?

A memory?

In moments of contemplation. A fragment begins to come into view.

It's as if the object's chaotic or structured state reveals a clue to a larger narrative that is yet to be fully grasped.

Have I seen this before?

There is a sense of familiarity.

A puzzling moment in time.

The in-between point where materials and objects transform from one thing to another.

The object, or perhaps its underlying system, seems to hint at recognition, inviting deeper exploration into the connection between past and present, order and chaos.

It evokes a feeling as if it's a memory broken into several parts (off-kilter).

To me, it is as if time is standing still and somehow I feel at home.

In Whelan's practice ideas, questions and mysteries surround her work.

I find myself always left wanting to revisit it and wanting more.

Through the use of painting, sculpture and installation she is able to let viewers into an unknown realm.

Detritus, ready-made objects and imagery come together and inhabit one another creating an atmosphere that is fluid, unconstrained and coherent.



art as a language you can wrap around things
intactness is becoming very slippery
a wall reversed, a knock down texture, looking through it
freedom, change, histories, layers, tenderness?
de facto slightly-off-ness

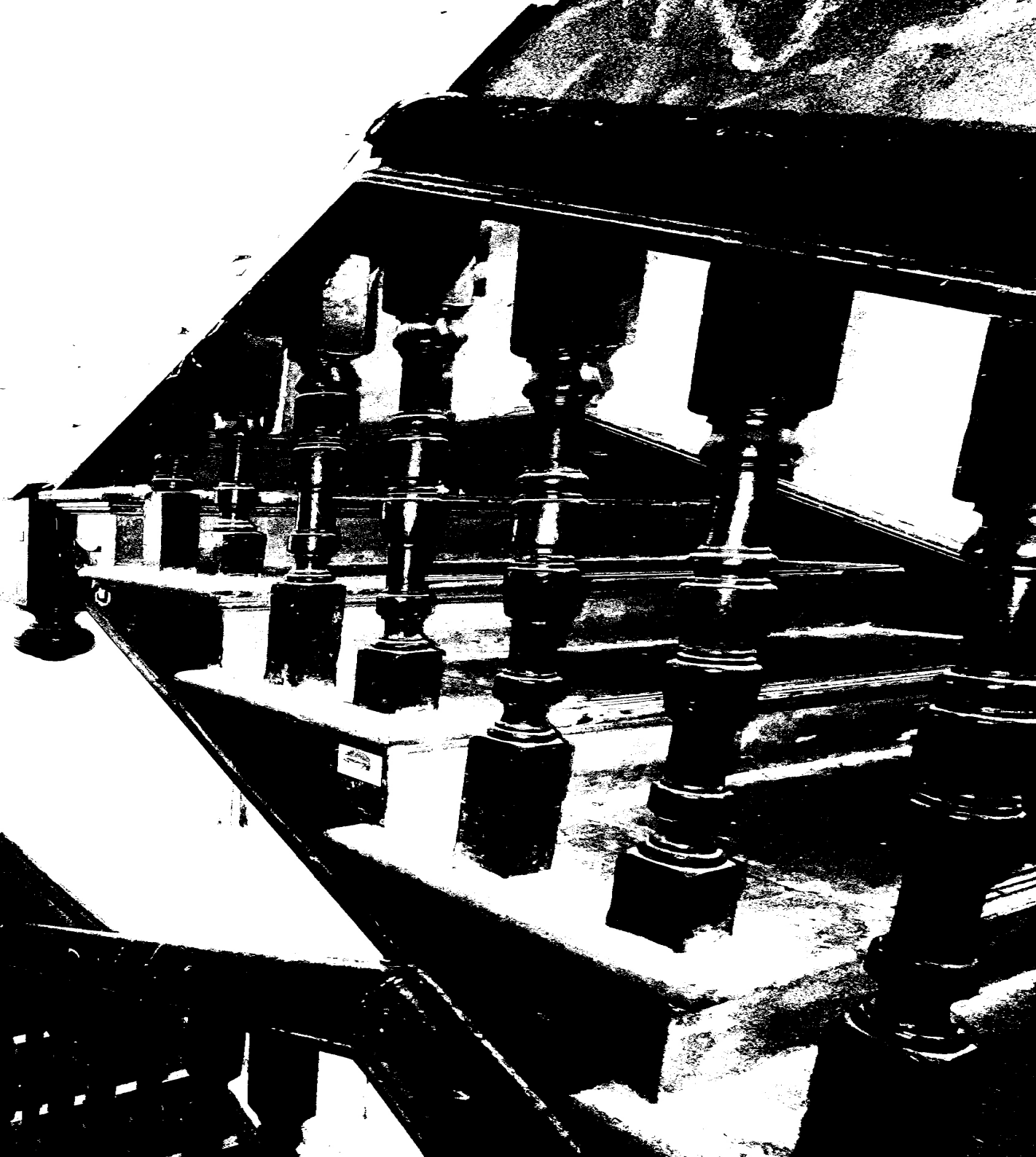


yellow paper covering what?
decorative finishes, the telstra tower
a material saviour complex
pokies graphic of a bird of paradise, levitating, love prevails
devoted to the domestic, to surfaces that obscure -
are these more or less there than what is underneath?

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From left to right starting from doorway

Sadie Whelan, *Consolation Nor Grace*

2024, gel medium transfer on plywood, dimensions variable, NFS

Alice Martin, *Lying, Down*

2024, beeswax, wood and debris, dimensions variable, \$400

Fergus Berney-Gibson, *The pig farmer had long since stopped believing in God*

2024, textile ink on lamb leather (Australian automobile upholstery seconds), 23 x 30.6cm, \$410

Sadie Whelan, *Cardinal Signifier*

2024, concrete, iron gate, acrylic, plywood, foam, canvas, gel medium transfer, dimensions variable, NFS

Sadie Whelan, *Fluid And Useful*

2024, concrete, plaster, fake flowers, pink pigment, 20cm x 7cm, \$50

Fergus Berney-Gibson, *The golden boy and his infamous glass Eye*

2024, solvent on lamb leather (Australian automobile upholstery seconds), 23 x 30.6cm

Alice Martin, *Mantel, Piece*

2024, beeswax, wood and debris, dimensions variable, \$1000

Fergus Berney-Gibson, *Before the pneumonia, you were a stocky Boy*

2024, aluminium and polyepoxide, dimensions variable, NFS

Alice Martin, *the perfect pinecone*

2024, brown microcrystalline wax, dimensions variable, \$400

Fergus Berney-Gibson, *I'm uncomfortable when you're in the House*

2024, solvent on lamb leather (Australian automobile upholstery seconds), 23 x 30.6cm, \$410

Alice Martin, *Lying, Down (2)*

2024, beeswax, wood and debris, dimensions variable, \$400

Fergus Berney-Gibson, *It'll be Real Nice*

2024, solvent and textile ink on lamb leather (Australian automobile upholstery seconds), 23 x 30.6cm, \$410