

Traces

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In the Department of Art and Art History
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Saskatoon

By

Emily Conlon

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Exhibition Statement

Traces

My Practice is motivated by visceral awareness within natural spaces and an impulse to document experiences within these spaces to serve as a form of remembrance and preservation. Through these encounters, I seek to acknowledge the state of constant change, both in terms of growth and decay, in natural environments while exploring how these experiences can resonate more deeply and serve to fuel a journey of the imagination. Working primarily with drawing and printmaking, my process is largely intuitive and takes shape as a form of note-taking and personal reflection.

This paper explores these interests further and provides context to how they have been materialized in my MFA exhibition at The Gallery at Frances Morrison Central Library. Through my work, I aim to garner closer relationships between the viewer and their surroundings and explore how these experiences become internalized and generate new narratives. I do this by observing overlooked aspects of natural spaces, objects, and nuanced intangible moments, and viewing them through the lens of memory, something which I explore as being tied to these experiences through collecting and visual associations.

I entered the MFA program with a practice that revolved around my environment in my hometown of Windsor, Ontario – a border city that thrives on the automotive industry. My practice has always been heavily influenced by my surroundings. In particular, I made note of the remnants of industry which were neglected or abandoned, in some cases, for decades. This stemmed from growing up across the street from a building called the Walker Power Building, which for the majority of my lifetime, was abandoned. Despite being a historic structure, it was in a state of neglect for a long time and became undesirable. While this building was not useful in the same way it was previously, it became a quiet place where my siblings and I would build small tree forts outside of, and a place where the uncontrolled landscape became a source of curiosity and exploration. Growing up and beginning to view the Walker Power Building from an artist's perspective, I made note of its unique textures and imagery in its state of deterioration. The interests that stemmed from this led me to explore the function of human spaces when they no longer serve us, and investigate what their purposes may be beyond their initial intended use.

In these spaces, the more disregarded aspects of the natural environment – insects, rodents, weeds, nests, and other “pests” – flourish, and the natural materials that these structures once displaced now occupy and repurpose industrial spaces. Over the course of my BFA at the University of Windsor, this building underwent massive renovations, and today houses several offices and commercial businesses, continuing the cycle of displacement. While the human-made environment is not prominent in this exhibition or in much of the work I produced throughout the MFA program at the University of Saskatchewan, these curiosities remained in mind and fueled the explorations that came together to form *Traces*.

The prairies have a very distinct landscape in terms of their flatness and how the plains allow us to see the landscape sprawl on seemingly endlessly. Despite the physical landscape being a noticeable shift in my move from Ontario, I have come to realize that one of the most notable things about the prairies is not the land, but the sky. This is something I have undeniably responded to in my work during my time in Saskatoon despite being unaware of how this impacted my practice until reflecting on it very recently. In reflecting on how my work has changed as my location has changed, I have noticed that the work I have produced in Saskatoon has placed more emphasis on nuanced and unseen aspects of the natural landscape such as wind, suspension, tension, turbulence, and how these elements create movement in their interactions with natural materials. These vestiges allow me to highlight the impermanence of daily encounters through the act of walking, reflect on the inability to relive a moment the same way twice despite how our routines may provoke us to walk the same paths frequently, and bring it into my work through the lens of memory. My practice in the past two years has moved away from a focus on human-made architecture and environments and turned to a sole focus on the natural environment with evidence of human activity and nuances of controlled infrastructure woven throughout.

“When you give yourself to places, they give yourself back, the more one comes to know them, the more one seeds them with the invisible crop of memories and associations.”¹

Objects can represent a memory or bring us back to a space or point in time through the associations we attach to them. Collections function this way. In my own experience, a handful

¹ Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (New York: Penguin, 2001), 13.

of shells that I have collected from a beach on the east coast of Ireland can transport me to that moment as if it had just happened. Through those objects, I can recall details as specific as the weather, conversations that took place there, and many other details surrounding that moment. Similarly, ephemera are objects intended for short-term use despite them having no purpose past their intended lifespans. They are objects which people hold on to for sentimental value because they possess new meaning in their ties to the experiences they represent. According to Dame Frances Yates, “artificial memory is established from places and images.”² Yates’ *Art of Memory* investigates the history of mnemonic devices in what she describes as memory loci, which requires one to attach a memory to an object within an imagined space in their mind. When one visualizes this space, they should then be able to remember what each object in this fictional space represents. Yates suggests that these loci become fictitious spaces in our minds that serve as a tool of remembering, which is something I have considered in the way I frequently distort imagery into objects and spaces that originate from something tangible and experienced, but which take on new form and new life similar to how I imagine it may exist in the mind. Yates also emphasizes that “it is better to form one’s memory loci in a deserted and solitary place for crowds of passing people tend to weaken the impressions.”³ The natural environments that I work within and refer to serve as a neutral ground to generate these imaginative narratives.

While the theories and techniques discussed in *The Art of Memory* are not central to the work in this exhibition, they have had influence on how I consider my subject matter and how they may be tied to or become visual representations of recalled experiences. The subject matter I work with is pulled from various source material that I have collected – written notes, sketches, photos, video, and collected objects among a multitude of other things. With regards to the idea of memory loci, each piece of what I collect is tied to an experienced moment and comes together to form an experience of the imagination. In considering the narratives that form out of memory, I also acknowledge that they are not always linear. Additionally, memory is often refracted, its recollection lacking in clarity. Much of my work, particularly in printmaking, attempts to visualize this through imagery that is layered, folded, fragmented, and has moments which are clear and others which are indistinct or concealed. They become an abstracted version of these encounters, much like the recollection of a memory. My work is also often quite circular

² Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: The Bodley Head, 2014), 22.

³ Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 23.

to emphasize that the definitions of beginning and end are unclear or non-existent. Typically, this imagery is also suspended in space – ungrounded and untied to a sense of place, something which I believe would disrupt the imagination.

*“Through the brilliance of an image,
the distant past resounds with echoes.”⁴*

My process is intuitive and something I see as a form of reflection on memories and fragments pulled from my source imagery which all come together to form these new imagined spaces and moments. Memory changes over time. In my own experience, the more you recall them and the more distant the recollection, the more distorted they become. The further you are removed from the initial moment, the more it is subject to change, and that is something I seek to communicate in my work. I embrace this idea in my working process as well. A lived experience is transcribed into written words, images, sketches, or collected material. These source materials follow me to the studio where they are puzzled together in a sense and translated mainly through drawing or print-based practices. Oftentimes, I work with film photography for source imagery which requires time for photo development. I also tend to be precious with each frame in a roll of film, saving each one for a “worthy” photo since there are more limitations with analog photography compared to the thousands of photos I have saved on my phone at any given moment. Because of this, it can take a while to accumulate enough film for developing. Due to the nature of this process, I often revisit these images a year or more later. I aim to embrace how these moments become lost in translation and explore how they can function in new forms and contexts.

*“Imagination has both shaped and been shaped
by the spaces it passes through on two feet.”⁵*

There are many instances in my work where repetitive imagery and mark making occur and patterns begin to form. In Rebecca Solnit’s *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, she breaks down the history of walking and how thoughts occur at a walking pace: “The rhythm of walking generates a kind of rhythm of thinking, and the passage through a landscape echoes or stimulates

⁴ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), xvi.

⁵ Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, 4.

the passage through a series of thoughts.”⁶ In my work, each repetitive mark becomes a product of these thoughts as I wander, and they take on the rhythm and pace of these navigations. It is my intention that this visual pace I create through my work can be tied back to “rhythms of the body, to breathing and the beating of the heart.”⁷ In creating relationships to the body through a visual language, it is my hope that the viewer is able to identify more closely with the work and feel inclined to relate it to their own lived experiences. The trails that begin to form in my compositions also trace movements throughout a physical space and begin to take on the role of a map, which I trace just as intuitively as one might wander through these spaces.

In the work I produced before entering the MFA program, I often used the motif of the nest. In observing relationships between human-made spaces and natural spaces, the nest became an appropriate middle ground to work with in that it is derived from nature but also has architectural qualities that mimic our own. The nest is also a domestic space that can potentially repurpose or co-exist with our own spaces since they are often found in abandoned or quiet areas of homes and buildings. The occupants of nests tend to be able to find a sense of belonging in places we cannot. Over time, these nests became further removed from their original contexts. I was no longer placing them within an identifiable space, and they gradually became abstracted into something that one could recognize as an organic object, but began to take on a new form. As my work developed throughout the MFA program, the influence of the nest is apparent, but they have become something else entirely and now serve a new purpose for my work. They have become a mode of tracing movement and map making, which notes my own movement and the energy and motion within the spaces I navigate through. Sometimes more turbulent, sometimes calm, sometimes tightly bound, and sometimes sprawling. There are moments of rest, and moments of wandering.

In Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space*, he discusses how inhabited spaces that represent home or a sense of belonging, including the nest, have the capacity to shape our memory and imagination: “but an empty shell, like an empty nest, invites daydreams of refuge.”⁸ My “nests” mark the starting point of these daydreams and guide these narratives as they trail through a composition. Bachelard also suggests that the joy of finding a nest brings us back to childhood memories, as most people seem to have some moment in their life in which they

⁶ Ibid, 6.

⁷ Ibid, 5.

⁸ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 107.

encountered a nest for the first time with childlike curiosity, and that they bring us feelings of comfort in their familiarity and associations with our own notions of home.⁹ With this in mind, I hope to use nest-like imagery to allow my viewers to tap into their own memory and generate imaginative dialogue through their own past experiences.

“The warm, calm nest / In which the bird sings // Recalls the songs, the charms, / The pure threshold / Of my old home.”¹⁰

Over the course of the MFA program, I have also used thread to explore methods of mapping movement. With embroidery methods, there are marks created on the front of a work, and marks that trail behind which are typically meant to be hidden. I am interested in the histories these extra threaded trails hold. They tell stories about the journey it took to get to the marks that are made on the front. As Rebecca Solnit points out, there tends to be an “insistence that travel is less important than arrival,”¹¹ and this is something I seek to challenge. There is also a loss of control that comes with exposing the back of a work. In the process of stitching, these threads are not considered to the same extent as the ones shown on the front of the work are. They begin to accumulate as marks that make up their own patterns and compositions. I have come to embrace the materiality of the thread and the potential that revealing both sides of the work has when it is given the same importance as the front. Embroidery is also a practice that is typically very calculated and intentional. In my work, I attempt to approach the practice more intuitively and gesturally, almost as an extension of drawing or a drawing tool itself rather than an embellishment on top of an existing work.

“Repeated acts of seeing and reseeing produce ‘memory’ – another term for the iteration of reading, as the eye surveys a landscape made newly legible by language.”¹²

I have looked to numerous other artists whose practices resonate with the processes and ideas I work with in this exhibition. In investigating the work of Cy Twombly, I have found similarities in how I translate my ideas to a visual language. Twombly’s marks can be described

⁹ Ibid, 94.

¹⁰ Ibid, 100

¹¹ Solnit, *Wanderlust: The History of Walking*, 10.

¹² Mary Jacobus and Cy Twombly, *Reading Cy Twombly: Poetry in Paint*, 316.

as “exposed, and even unhinged, and almost suspended in midair”¹³ which is key in translating these stories through visual bodily expression. An absence of location allows his work to exist as an extension of the mythological themes he references with no tethers to reality. In his retelling of ancient history, poetry, and myth through visual recollection, he is creating “work that declares nothing beyond itself and its viscerally felt, fidgety elegance, but that nevertheless talks, recites, and references.”¹⁴ While my work does not necessarily have many comparisons visually to the work of abstract expressionists like Cy Twombly, it does engage with an interest in recounting stories or moments through less cognitive processes that result in some form of visual poetics similar to the motivations behind abstract expressionism.

I am also very intrigued by the work of Julie Mehretu, whose practice is rooted in interests surrounding architecture and urban environments. She visualizes these spaces through layers of imagery as seen from different points of view combined in one space. She “has described her rich canvases as ‘story maps of no location’, seeing them as pictures into an imagined, rather than actual reality.”¹⁵ The various viewpoints and layering in her work suggest that these spaces are being expressed through recollective references as a means of tracing and mapping from memory. Mehretu’s “fragments are not the broken parts of total languages, they are part of a process of describing the world: they come together as they fall apart.”¹⁶ Similarly, my own process involves borrowing fragments of familiar imagery and piecing them together to form new spaces and provide the framework to generate new narratives. Mehretu assigns characters and identities to her marks: “I would think of each mark as having a characteristic or an identity,”¹⁷ but “Instead of just the architectural languages delineating the space, the characters and swarms actually develop and create the space. The architectural language serves as a marker to the type and the history of the space, but the characters make the space and break it down.”¹⁸ Like Twombly, there is no grounding in reality present in Mehretu’s work; rather, she uses these characters and swarms to create their own realities with no other influences present.

¹³ Roberta Smith, “An Artist of Selective Abandon,” *The New York Times*, July 6, 2011.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/07/arts/design/cy-twombly-an-art-who-emphasized-mark-making.html>

¹⁴ James Miller, “How Cy Twombly Spliced Poetry into His Art,” *Hyperallergic*,

<https://hyperallergic.com/334519/how-cy-twombly-spliced-poetry-into-his-art/>

¹⁵ White Cube, “Artists - Julie Mehretu,” White Cube, https://whitecube.com/artists/artist/julie_mehretu.

¹⁶ Lawrence Chua, “Julie Mehretu by Lawrence Chua,” *BOMB Magazine*, April 1, 2005.

¹⁷ Lawrence Chua, “Julie Mehretu by Lawrence Chua.”

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

In the work of Jill O'Bryan, another artist whose work has resonated with me in the past few years, themes of traced memory and impermanence reveal themselves in her desire to make plein air experiences physical and tangible by imprinting them on archival surfaces. O'Bryan looks to create a new visual language that brings focus to the poeticism found in nature while creating connections between self and place. In addition to creating a pace in the work, the process of repetition in part becomes a way of measuring the time spent making these works.

In Mary Jacobus' reading of Cy Twombly's work, she states that "Repeated acts of seeing and reseeing produce 'memory' – another term for the iteration of reading, as the eye surveys a landscape made newly legible by language."¹⁹ I find this to be true of the function of repetition in my own work as well as a common theme I have found throughout the work and motivations of artists I have pulled influence from throughout my MFA. Jacobus' statement on the connection of repetition to the notion of memory and how this is reflected in the work of many of the artists I have sought inspiration from provides insight as to how recollective thoughts can be commonly visualized among artists.

¹⁹ Mary Jacobus and Cy Twombly, *Cy Twombly: Poetry in Paint* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 193.

Traces in The Gallery at Frances Morrison Central Library

Something I love about printmaking is the ability to recreate an image in new ways as many times as necessary. Oftentimes, I have difficulty deciding on orientations and installation methods with a particular print. There are also happy accidents and endless experiments which can come with the experience of being a printmaker. The idea of carefully curating these works and rejecting some of these moments that occur in the printmaking studio feels as though I would be concealing an important part of my process. This is especially a concern for me considering the importance I place on parts of my working process being evident in my work. In this exhibition, I wanted to be sure to reveal the experiences of being a printmaker and use it as an opportunity to expose more of my process. Throughout *Traces*, there are combinations of prints with interventions of other materials and some of the imagery repeats more than once but is used differently. Each fragment helps inform the larger picture – fueling imaginative narratives within the gallery space.



Figure 01: Emily Conlon, *Being I*, 2022. Etching and glycerine on Iwami Natural paper and Stonehenge. (Photo: Carey Shaw).



Figure 02: Emily Conlon, *Being IV*, 2022. Etching and glycerine on Iwami Natural paper and Stonehenge. (Photo: Carey Shaw).

Part of my extensive experimentation throughout the program has been exploring ways of layering imagery so multiple narratives and perspectives occur simultaneously yet subtly, something which as mentioned previously I identify as being tied to recollective senses. *Being* is a series of prints on two layers of Japanese paper overlapped and mounted on white Stonehenge. The surface of each layer is coated in glycerin to allow the prints to appear more translucent, almost glass-like. With the glycerin, the second layer is visible but slightly out of focus, creating some distance and push and pull between presence and absence. I chose to hang these subtly suspended off the wall so they had the potential to interact with the airflow in the gallery space, which creates some sway and emphasizes the weightlessness and the movement of the works. The title *Being* points to the idea that these reimagined natural materials which almost resemble a deconstructed and reconstructed forest floor are living *beings* – a living body. It also points to the idea that in these symbols pulled from natural spaces with associations attached to them, they become proof of our own being, as our memories are evidence of being and existing.

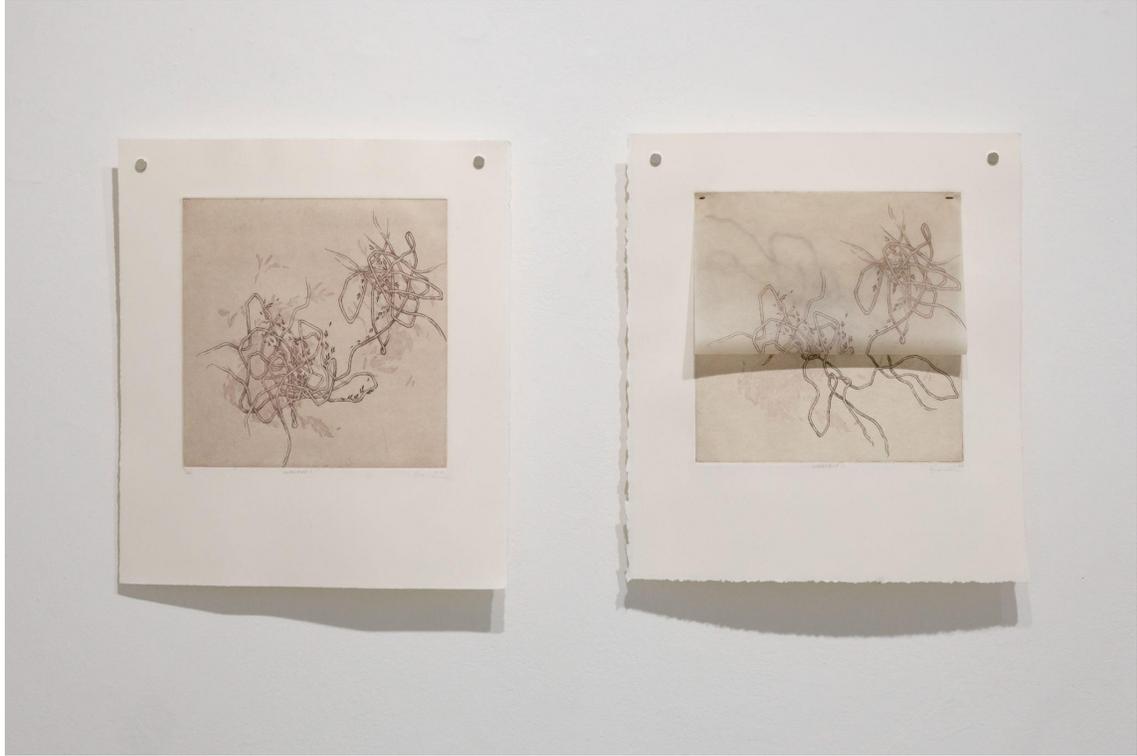


Figure 03: Emily Conlon, *Unearthed I* and *Unearthed III*, 2022. Etching and chine collé on Arches and Iwami Natural paper. (Photo: Carey Shaw).



Figure 04: Emily Conlon, *Unearthed I* and *Unearthed III*, 2022. Etching and chine collé on Arches and Iwami Natural paper. Exhibition view. (Photo: Carey Shaw).

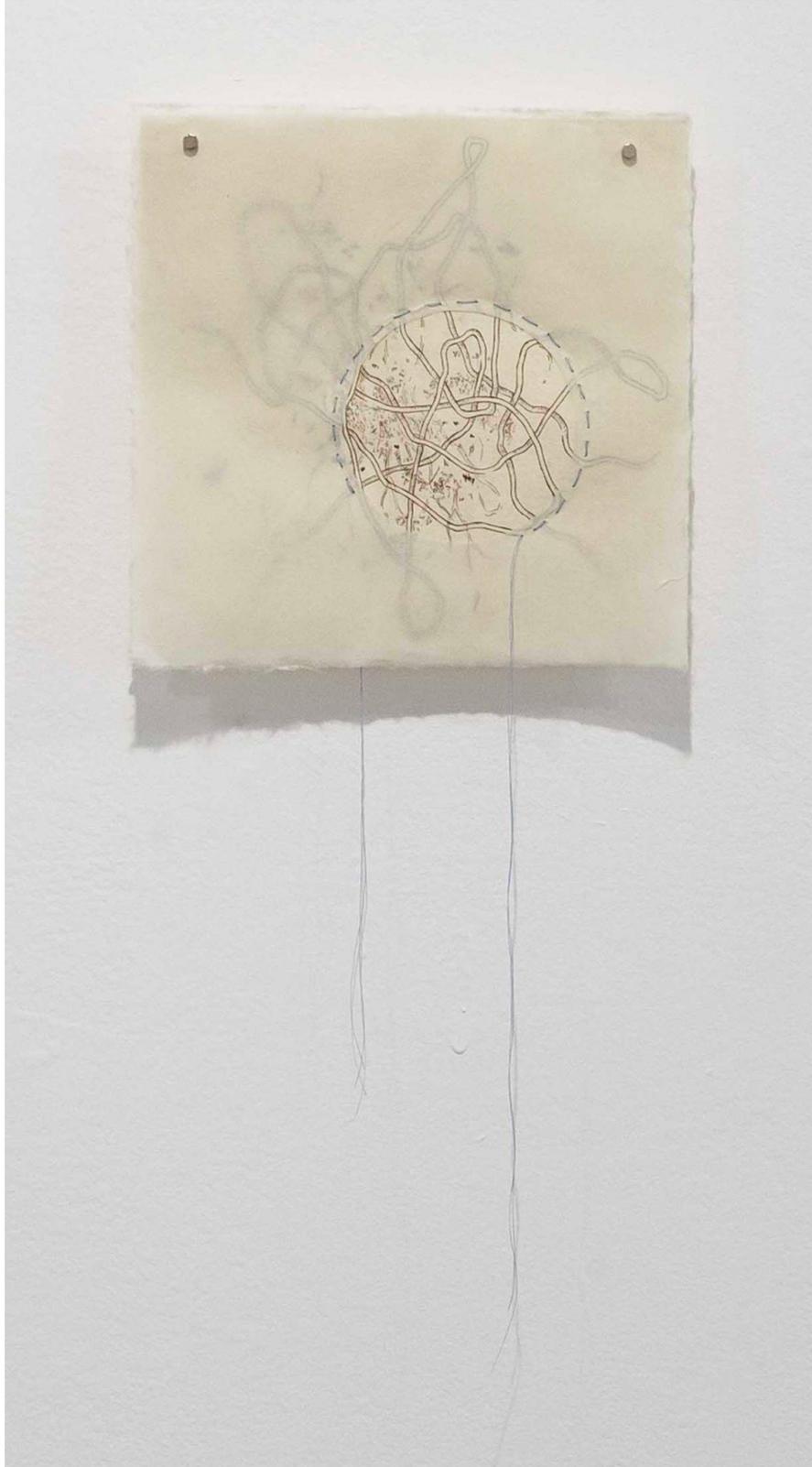


Figure 05: Emily Conlon, *Circle Back*, 2022. Etching, glycerine, and thread on Arches and Mura Kaji paper. (Photo: Carey Shaw).

Unearthed I, *Unearthed III*, and *Circle Back* were created out of similar motivations. With these prints, I took the experimentation a bit further by working more three-dimensionally with the prints to emphasize the movement of the works. The top layer of *Unearthed III* comes forward, folds back around, and reveals parts of the second layer that would otherwise be concealed. Similarly, I have experimented with the idea of concealing certain parts of the composition in *Circle Back* with other areas coming forward as the focal point, almost like a lens. With some details residing in our memory more vividly than others, I aim to highlight these areas that we hone in on, even if they may oftentimes be mundane. In focusing on the mundane, I hope to encourage reflection surrounding why it may be that “dull” experiences can sometimes stick with us.

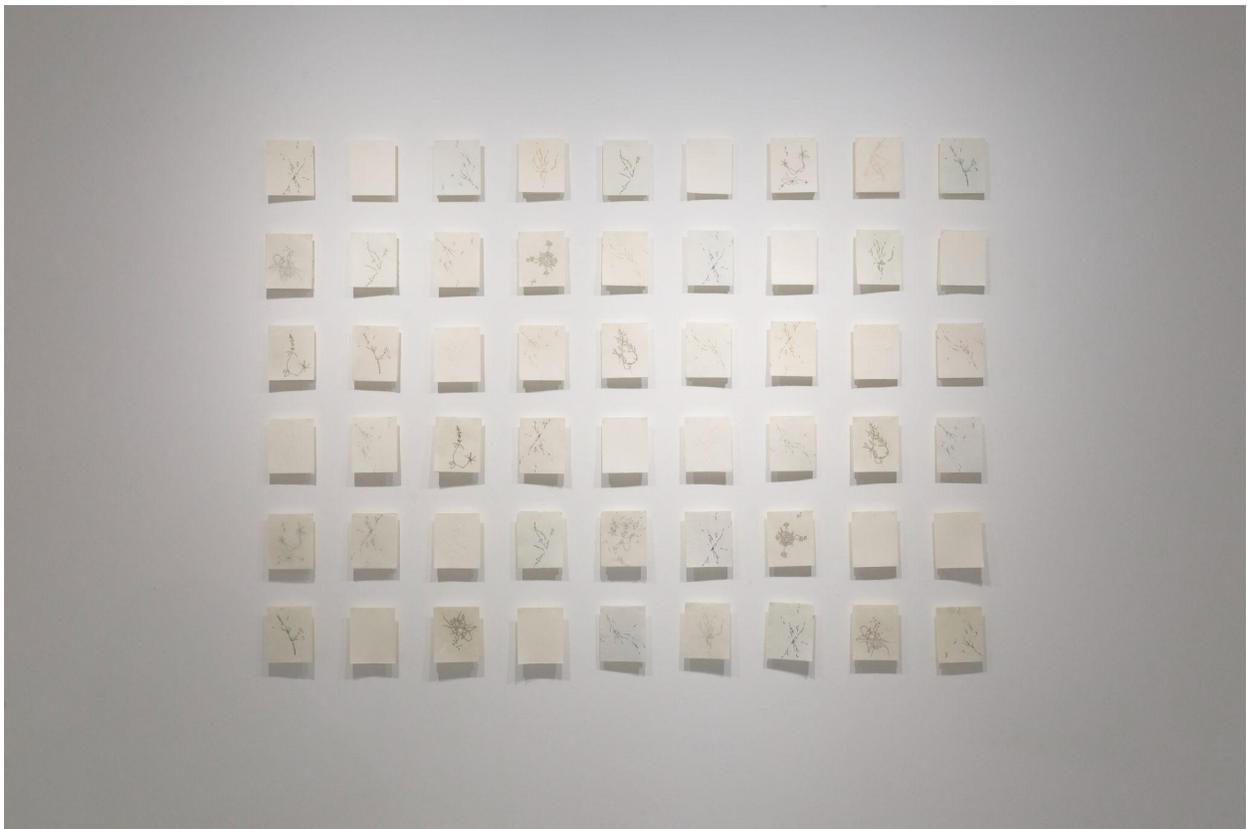


Figure 06: Emily Conlon, *Oscillation*, 2022. Etching, aquatint, embossing, and thread on BFK Rives. (Photo: Carey Shaw).



Figure 07: Emily Conlon, *Oscillation*, 2022. Etching, aquatint, embossing, and thread on BFK Rives. Detail. (Photo: Carey Shaw).

In considering how my preliminary work is as much a part of my practice as the work itself, it was important for me to bring aspects of it into the gallery space. *Oscillation* consists of multiple prints which are meant to mimic the scale of pages in a notebook or travel sized sketchbook. The grid in which they are arranged becomes something of a dissection of this form of personal documentation. The grid is made up of intaglio etchings, embossings, and blanks. The imagery comes from a combination of quick scribbles found in my sketchbook and objects I have collected. Some of the prints contain carefully considered details. Some of them are reduced to simplified shapes. The embossed pieces become a more simplified version of these prints. Sporadically, I have also placed blanks throughout the grid. There is an oscillation as the viewer navigates through the work, with information coming and going in waves, the more detailed fragments requiring focus and the blanks serving as a pause. It is my intention that as the viewer “reads” the grid, it takes on a rhythm – the pace of a walk, the up and down of a breath, an echo – something which is internally felt.



Figure 08: Emily Conlon, *Vestiges*, 2022. Graphite on shoji rice paper.

Installed in the centre of the gallery is *Vestiges*. The accumulation of marks on this large graphite drawing are all reduced to ambiguous, simplified gestures which allow the drawing to become many things: the direction of wind, currents, movement of branches, footprints, textures on the ground, or the movement of self through space for example. I find that communicating in more nuanced and raw gestures allow me to better situate the viewers in these spaces by communicating an experience through feeling rather than a documentative and more static narrative. Thinking back to the work of Jill O'Brian, the accumulation of marks becomes a way of measuring time. As a way for me to further engage the space within the gallery and immerse viewers in these spaces, I have suspended the drawing to imitate a physical pathway which people can walk alongside and around, which also causes the work to take on a subtle movement as it is very lightweight. As with some other work in the gallery, the paper undulates to take on

the rhythm of a walk. Patterns are cut into the surface of the paper, which in combination with the lighting in the space, are projected onto the ground and extend the installation beyond its physicality. They become intangible echoes of the marks on the surface.



Figure 09: Emily Conlon, *Muscle Memory*, 2022. Graphite, thread, and beeswax on muslin. (Photo: Carey Shaw).

Muscle Memory uses embroidery to trace movement through an unraveling pathway. The piece is done on muslin and is coated in a thin layer of beeswax which gives the surface a texture that seems to glow and take on life. With my curiosities around exposing multiple sides of a work, the beeswax allows the surface to become somewhat translucent. With this combination of materials and techniques, it is possible to see both sides simultaneously. Again here, there are moments of momentum and stillness. A human-made pathway through a natural space guides our movements and they become familiar, and the generic pathway resembles a place most people have been before.



Figure 10: Emily Conlon, *Traces*, 2022. Thread on Stonehenge. (Photo: Carey Shaw).



Figure 11: Emily Conlon, *Traces*, 2022. Thread on Stonehenge. Detail. (Photo: Carey Shaw).

Traces is a diptych made entirely of thread and paper. In previous versions of this piece, I attached a piece of Japanese paper over top through the chine collé process, which allowed the threads to emboss themselves into the surface. In doing so, the thread becomes preserved between two sheets of paper, the colours of the thread are subdued, and most importantly, both the front and back of the thread come through from the pressure of the press – an impression of a path travelled. My process becomes traceable and moments of rest and moments of movement can be identified through a close interaction with the work. For the purpose of this exhibition, I decided to eliminate the chine collé layer and allow the simplicity of the threaded marks to stand alone. In doing so, the marks are more vivid, more easily identifiable when viewing the work from afar, and the aspects of the work which are empty are also more apparent. Similar to my motivations with *Vestiges*, the simplification of the marks start to become many things, and can potentially be interpreted differently depending on how they resonate with the viewers and their own experiences.



Figure 12: Emily Conlon, *Residual*, 2022. Clay, thread, and etching on Mura Kaji paper. Detail. (Photo: Carey Shaw).



Figure 13: Emily Conlon, *Residual*, 2022. Clay, thread, and etching on Mura Kaji paper. (Photo: Carey Shaw).

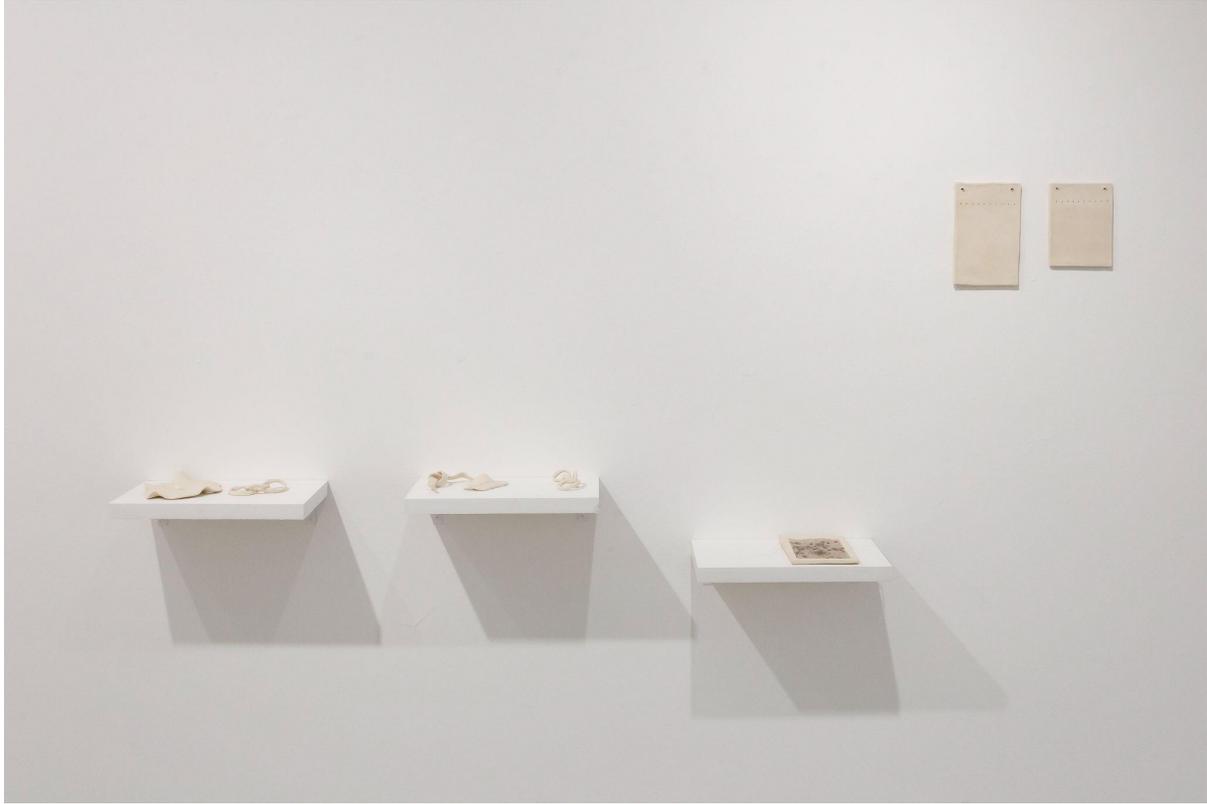


Figure 14: Emily Conlon, *Residual*, 2022. Clay, thread, and etching on Mura Kaji paper. (Photo: Carey Shaw).



Figure 15: Emily Conlon, *Residual*, 2022. Clay, thread, and etching on Mura Kaji paper. Detail. (Photo: Carey Shaw).

Installed on shelves throughout the gallery is *Residual*, a collection of small clay objects, prints, and thread pieced together to become an intimate, more tangible representation of the themes I have worked with throughout the exhibition. I see these clay fragments as three-dimensional versions of my marks, nestled together in their own small habitats. In particular, the piece of the installation which features a print draped over clay structural components begins to echo the undulation in *Vestiges*. Among these fragments, printed imagery which echoes the more organic nature of the other print works in *Traces* interacts with the clay fragments. I am interested in how the more structural components of the clay contrast with the organic qualities of the other work and materials, similar to how our own human interventions in natural spaces such as pathways and fences create disruptions which determine our movements. Reflecting on this, these fascinations can be derived from my previous interests in the relationship between built and natural environments.

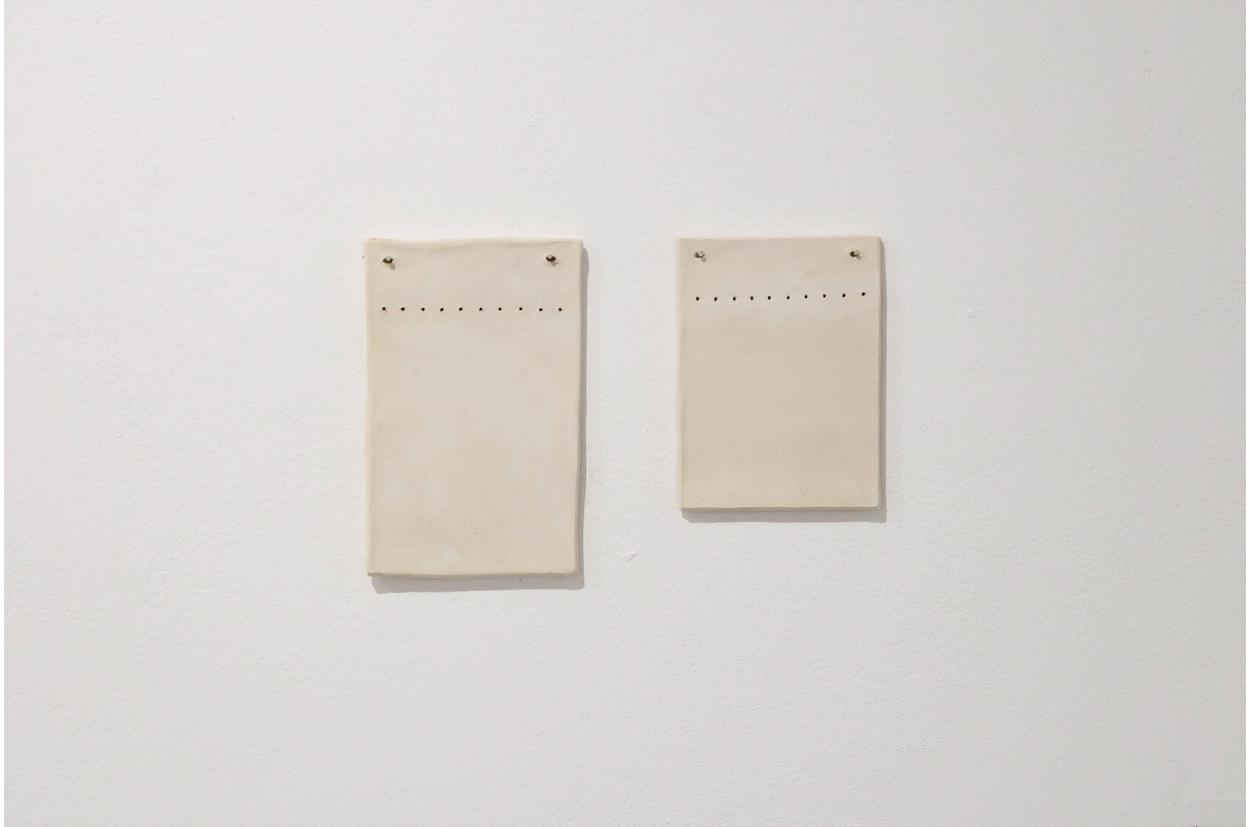


Figure 16: Emily Conlon, *Absence*, 2022. Clay. (Photo: Carey Shaw).

Contrasting with the sense of weightlessness of much of the other work throughout this exhibition, *Absence* is intended to act as a brief moment of grounding and pause in the space. With small holes poked through the clay tablets, these were created with the intention of sewing small prints on paper directly into the clay. In considering the fluctuations in clarity and focus throughout the exhibition, these felt necessary to leave empty, with the holes instead serving as a reminder that something *should* be there, but is missing, gone, or forgotten. Through the absence of what should be, I aim to generate inner dialogues that fill in these gaps. While the title of the work touches on absence in terms of what is physically missing in the work, it also speaks to an absentminded state – moments in which one is daydreaming or lost in thought.



Figure 17: Emily Conlon, *Pulse*, 2022. Stonehenge on a light box. (Photo: Carey Shaw).

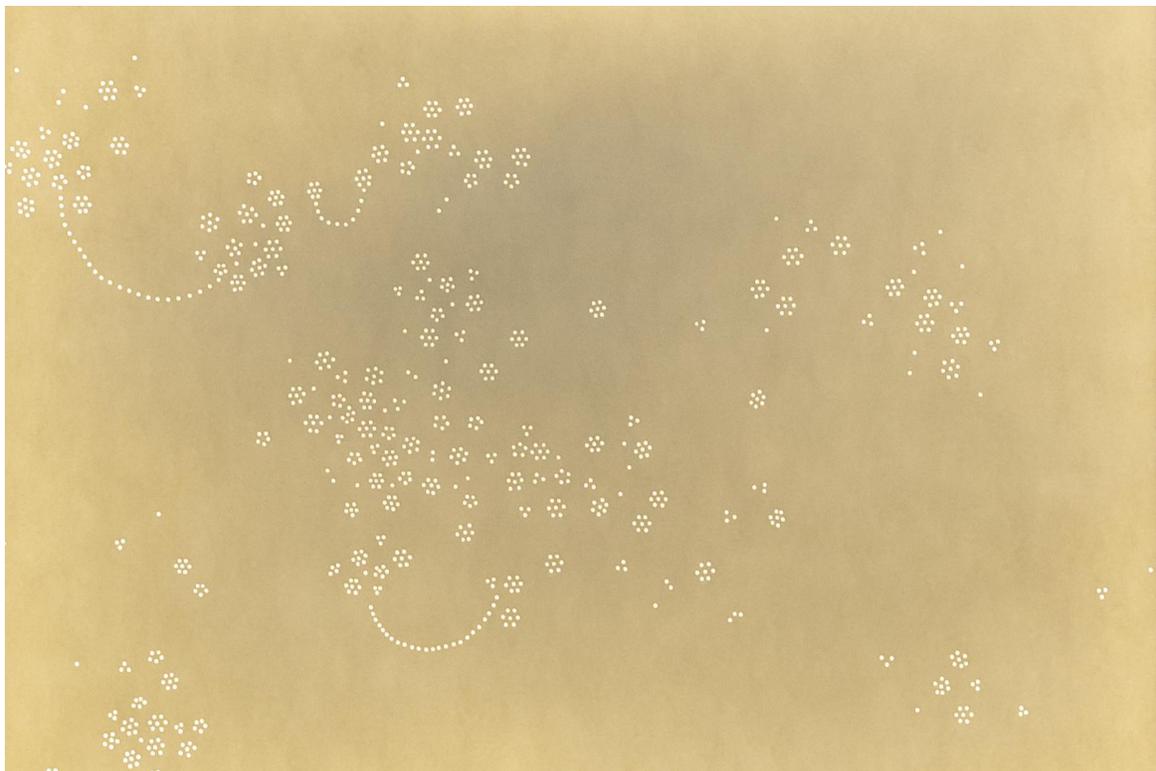


Figure 18: Emily Conlon, *Pulse* (Detail), 2022. Stonehenge on a light box. Detail. (Photo: Carey Shaw).

Continuing with the theme of absence is *Pulse*. This piece was done by poking holes into Stonehenge and placing the paper on a dim light box to emphasize the gaps throughout the paper. As with *Absence* and the context of my other work consisting of intricate patterns of thread, there becomes an implication that there should be stitched marks present but there is not. What is on the surface of the paper does not define the composition, as the paper is actually blank. Instead, the details which are missing become the prominent features of this work as the light that comes through the emptiness of the work from the light box behind defines it. This piece was created in response to some of the imagery in the *Breath* series, and made to the same scale to work in conversation with and become an echo of the other prints in the gallery.

Traces pulses throughout the gallery like the pace of a heart beat, the pace of a walk, or the rhythm of a breath. It is my goal that the range of scale in the gallery space allows encounters with the work to be both immersive as well as encouraging of close, intimate interactions with small, delicate, interwoven details within the smaller works which are sometimes undetectable from afar. The push and pull of these interactions are intended to enhance these rhythms that I have attempted to establish in the gallery space.

Much of my time in the MFA program at the University of Saskatchewan has been spent experimenting with different methods of conveying my ideas visually. Since my working process is an important part of my practice, this experimentation has been key in ensuring I am using processes, materials, and techniques that best serve my work. Through a great deal of trial and error, I strived to bring these ideas into a visual language in which each work is strung together as a body, each one informing the next. In the process, I broadened my knowledge of many different materials and processes, both traditional and unconventional, and came to understand my own motivations in new and expanded ways.

Through an ambiguous yet familiar language, it is my hope that these experiences can become universally understood, serve as an opportunity to generate imaginative inner dialogues, and become a source of reflection for my viewers. As Bachelard suggests, most of us have previous experiences encountering a nest in some way or another. Each encounter is unique and personal, but the very existence of these experiences seems to be shared among many.



Figure 19: Emily Conlon, *Traces* at The Gallery at Frances Morrison Central Library. Exhibition view. (Photo: Carey Shaw).

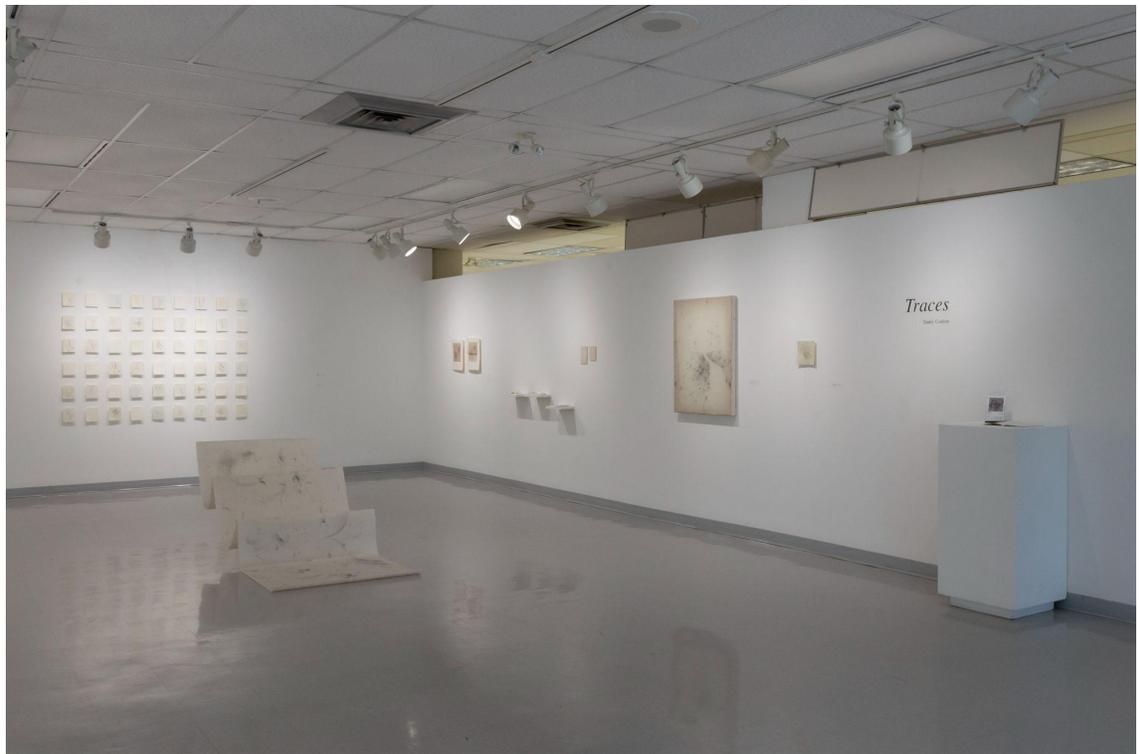


Figure 20: Emily Conlon, *Traces* at The Gallery at Frances Morrison Central Library. Exhibition view. (Photo: Carey Shaw).



Figure 21: Emily Conlon, *Traces* at The Gallery at Frances Morrison Central Library. Exhibition view. (Photo: Carey Shaw).



Figure 22: Emily Conlon, *Traces* at The Gallery at Frances Morrison Central Library. Exhibition view. (Photo: Carey Shaw).



Figure 23: Emily Conlon, *Traces* at The Gallery at Frances Morrison Central Library. Exhibition view. (Photo: Carey Shaw).



Figure 24: Emily Conlon, *Muscle Memory* and *Circle Back*. Exhibition view. (Photo: Carey Shaw).



Figure 25: Emily Conlon, *Being II*, 2022. Etching and glycerine on Iwami Natural paper and Stonehenge. Detail.
Figure 26: Emily Conlon, *Being III*, 2022. Etching and glycerine on Iwami Natural paper and Stonehenge. Detail.



Figure 27: Emily Conlon, *Being I-IV*, 2022. Etching and glycerine on Iwami Natural paper and Stonehenge. Exhibition view. (Photo: Carey Shaw).

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