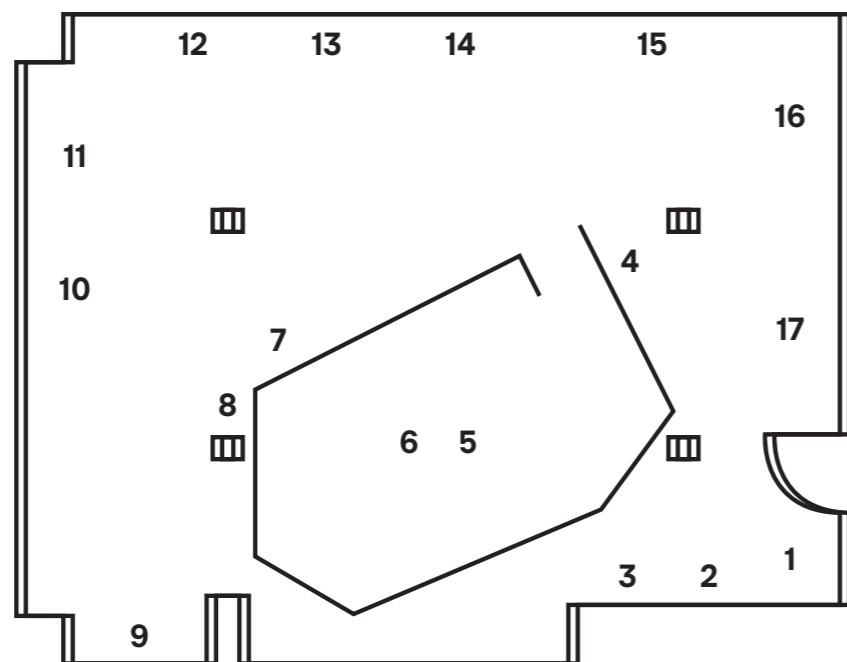


**THE BELIEF
IN THINGS
DISAPPEARING**



06/10/2023—15/12/2023

**THE BELIEF
IN THINGS
DISAPPEARING**
JO LATHWOOD

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Leave What You Find
Agar Agar, coffee, vegetable glycerin. 2022.

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Trick Production Box Painted in a Shiny Green Veneer with Black Painted Edges
Drawing with oak gall ink on recycled found paper. 2023.

3
Trick Vanishing Birdcage
Drawing with oak gall ink on recycled found paper. 2023.

4
Old Single Cut (Bronze Diamond)
Bronze, recycled timber plinth. 2013.

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Blind Den
Recycled timber and domestic blinds. 2023.

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The Belief in Things Disappearing
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Table Cut (Bronze Diamond)
Bronze, recycled timber plinth. 2013.

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Bronze. 2013.

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Bronze, recycled timber plinth. 2013.

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Marazin Cut (Bronze Diamond)
Bronze, recycled timber plinth. 2013.

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Trick Production Box Black and White with Fake Crystal Knobs
Drawing with oak gall ink on recycled found paper. 2023.

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Drawing with oak gall ink on recycled found paper. 2023.

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Trick Magic Metal Card Box
Drawing with oak gall ink on recycled found paper. 2023.

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Mobius Loop
Ash branch, bicycle inner tube, string, graphite, pebbles. 2023.

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Trick Dove Pan
Drawing with oak gall ink on recycled found paper. 2023.

17
Trick Magic Wooden Ball and Vase
Drawing with oak gall ink on recycled found paper. 2023.

The starting point for this exhibition comes as a self directed challenge, set by the artist to make a show that disappears.

Already deeply concerned with the environmental impact of her practice, this challenge has shaped every aspect of how the work has been made, shown and the idea of its disappearance once the exhibition closes.

Disappearance underpins every aspect of the work presented, explored through two key interconnecting, perhaps seemingly incongruous themes: waste and magic.

We are all engaged in the action of waste disposal, but our understanding of what happens to our rubbish is less commonly known. Our shifting relationship with the status of objects from once personal items to trash are transactions that are sometimes quick and other times difficult. As objects leave our personal domain and are thrown away - they 'disappear'. Yet the scientific theory of 'the conservation of mass' tells us that nothing can really disappear - matter can only transform into different elements, whether they be gas, liquid or a solid. We can create or destroy objects but the resources on the earth are finite.

Traditionally magic held a space between art and science that used to be a much bigger part of our understanding of the world. Magic resides in the realm of the unknown and as technology has advanced there is less space for grey areas, deception or pure belief. We watch as items vanish in the magician's sleight of hand trick, knowing it for what it is.

Primarily a sculptor, there is of course a dichotomy between an artist who makes things that live in the world and a desire for a practice to have no environmental impact. Questions of how we think about material objects and consume within a capitalist structure rub up against the systems of value, legacy and ownership proliferated by the artworld.

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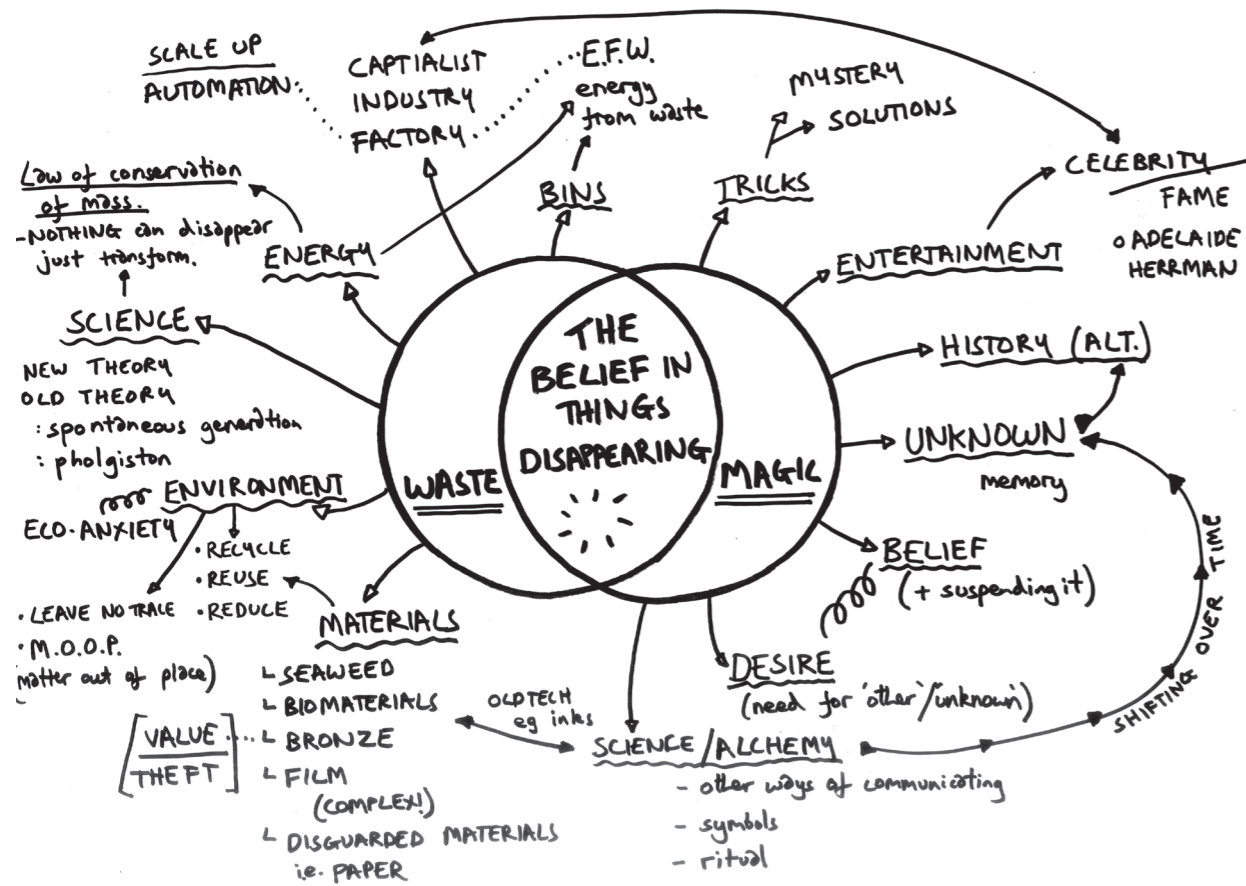
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MIRROR is a public gallery, events programme and online resource supported within Arts University Plymouth. MIRROR commissions new work and produces exhibitions, events, residencies, research and student-led projects, with a specific focus on enriching the careers of artists based within the South West region.

Our free public gallery is open to everyone to visit and we look forward to welcoming you to our space.

MIND MAP



ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Jo Lathwood's practice straddles drawing, sculptural works and large installations in both galleries and the public realm.

She applies an interdisciplinary approach to her research which incorporates science, technology, craft and art. Working with recycled timber she has built a meandering staircase that travelled across three storeys to facilitate the audience to touch the roof of a church. Experimenting with foundry technologies, she developed a way of casting lava into contemporary forms and through researching traditional techniques, she has made and shared how to make inks from Oak Galls.

Themes such as transitions, viewpoints, illusions, aspiration, environmentalism and anti-capitalism are woven throughout her practice. Lathwood is acutely aware of our impact on our environment and regularly makes work with and about recycled and waste materials. Since writing an open manifesto in 2019 she aspires to make each artwork within a sustainable system.

Jo Lathwood (1984) studied at University of Brighton where she acquired a First Class Degree in Fine Art Sculpture. She is founding trustee for BRICKs who promote the arts in Bristol and provide affordable studio spaces for artists. She is also on the council for Earth Art Gallery which links artists to academics in the field of Earth Sciences providing space for collaboration at Bristol University.

COLLABORATORS/THANKS

Anna Barrett - for the support and driving big vehicles.
 Jade Beavan - for the EFW tour.
 Paul Blakemore - for tech help, D.O.P. and sound advice.
 The Box - for archive access.
 Peter Clifford - for the magic.
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 ERC and tech team at AUP.
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 Rusty Cleave - for film knowledge and being an impromptu foley artist.
 Elaine Sinclair - for organising and being a wingwoman.
 Magaret Steele - for sharing knowledge about Adelaide Herrman.
 Pete Thomas - for mixing and mastering.

WORKS

The Belief in Things Disappearing
 Single Channel Film. 17mins. 2023

Acting as a glue for the exhibition, *The Belief in Things Disappearing* is Lathwood's first exploration into working with film. The narrative weaves sleight of hand tricks, a visit to an Energy From Waste plant, research into chemical experiments, alchemical symbols, forgotten magicians and stories of old and new artworks together. The film, shot with a range of cameras, attempts to reveal unknowns that are part of our everyday and asks questions about value and permanence. The retelling of forgotten scientific theories, aims to remind viewers how quickly we can change and adapt our understanding of the world.

Bristol Diamonds
 Bronze. 2013

Scattered around the gallery sit four oversized bronze cast diamonds. Each diamond has a date embossed on the side which references the evolution of cut designs of precious stones from the 14th Century to the present day. Precious stones, seen as archetypally valuable, are cut so as to catch the light, the more complex the cut the more the light bounces around, causing the stone to glisten for longer. Bronze, a naturally opaque material, can not catch the light in this way but Lathwood uses this material as a reference for traditional value within the artwork.

The work was originally made in response to *Bristol Diamonds* which are a type of clear quartz stone originally mistaken for the 'real deal'. After the correct identification, the fake diamonds became a synonym for something bright but worthless, ironically later becoming increasingly popular as a collectable item, depleting the supply within its natural landscape of the Avon Gorge in Bristol.

Trick Magic Wooden Ball and Vase
 Drawing with oak gall ink on recycled found paper. 2023.

Trick Dove Pan
 Drawing with oak gall ink on recycled found paper. 2023.

Trick Production Box Black and White With Fake Crystal Knobs
 Drawing with oak gall ink on recycled found paper. 2023.

Trick Varnishing Birdcage
 Drawing with oak gall ink on recycled found paper. 2023.

Trick Production Box Painted in a Shiny Green Veneer with Black Painted Edges
 Drawing with oak gall ink on recycled found paper. 2023.

Trick Dice Box
 Drawing with oak gall ink on recycled found paper. 2023.

Trick Magic Metal Card Box
 Drawing with oak gall ink on recycled found paper. 2023.

A series of 7 large drawings made from scavenged waste paper and natural Oak gall ink collected from trees in the artist's local woodland. The hodgepodge sheets are stuck together with glue made by mixing flour and water and form irregular shaped canvases. The ancient black ink is incredibly lightfast and is made by crushed Oak galls mixed with water and rust. The drawings depict studies of props used in illusion tricks with the intention to make objects disappear.

Blind Den
 Recycled timber and domestic blinds. 2023
 Constructed from recycled timber and fabric blinds sourced and on loan from Plymouth's Scrap Store. This folly acts as a functional space that reduces the light levels in the gallery needed for a projection. The dimensions of the gallery have dictated the form of the structure. The selected green fabrics make subtle reference to green screens which are used in film and TV to make objects disappear, whilst also linking to one of the main environments within the film, the woodland. The use of blinds playfully adds to themes of disappearance and things that are kept hidden from view.

Alchemical Symbols
 Single Channel Film. 4.35mins. 2023

In a second film *Alchemical Symbols*, a collection of old alchemical symbols, slowly morph and reform in front of the viewer. The symbols translate to various processes used in scientific experiments such as 'to rot', 'to filter', 'to take' etc. These markings were widely used as a shorthand up until the 18th Century, traversing a time period where art and

science were more closely aligned. The symbols presented in the film are made from biomaterials - a relatively new thread of material science which focuses on materials that have a limited lifespan and naturally degrade. The symbols also feature throughout *The Belief in Things Disappearing* acting as signifiers to actions happening within the larger narrative of the film.

Mobius Loop
 Ash branch, bicycle innertube, string, graphite and pebbles. 2023

With a desire to make artworks that return to the landscape that they first came from and with a nod to artist Cornelia Parker's 1992 work *Words that Define Gravity*. Lathwood's *Mobius Loop* showcases a slingshot and 7 ammunition stones destined to be catapulted off a cliff. Inscribed on each stone is the chasing arrow symbol. These symbols are widely misunderstood in packaging to signify the recyclability of material, when in fact it is a label to denote the types of plastic, some of which can not be recycled. After this exhibition the stones will be fired into the sea off Plymouth coastline. For this work, the documentation of the action becomes the only lasting trace and arguably more valuable than the artworks soon to be on the seabed.

Leave What You Find
 Agar Agar, coffee, vegetable glycerin. 2022.

'Leave What You Find' is a part of a series of ladder sculptures that Lathwood has been developing to experiment with and understand biomaterials as a new low impact sculptural material. Biomaterials by their nature are impermanent and have a short lifespan. The legacy of these ephemeral works sit closer to performance works than traditional sculpture. The particular recipe used for these works consists of agar agar (a type of seaweed), sawdust, vegetable glycerin, oak gall ink and water. It has the consistency of dried Weetabix and is very light.

Ladders of different forms have regularly made an appearance throughout Lathwood's practice as she sees them as a symbol of change, desire and aspiration. They are the quintessential tools to get over something, to conquer obstacles and shift a viewpoint. The title of this work is taken from the 7 principles of 'leave no trace' (a set of ethics promoting conservation of the outdoors).