

# Containment / Maze as Metaphor

by Madeline Simm

exhibition text for *Augusta Vinall Richardson — How Do You Wish for a Lifetime of Happiness?* at Discordia, Melbourne, 23.01.21–20.02.21

The sculpture sits proud and peaceful and the idea moves away on its own accord. The work can never fall apart, thoughts are robust ships, and the anchors were left on some island. Materials and order.

Things joined—when I say ‘things’ I am referring to objects and not a complex situation, as in when people say a remark like ‘life happens’. Then what am I doing beyond cutting an idea into small pieces? Building it again, and it’s just how I wanted it to be! Finished. Laughter really is a wonderful thing. Nothing is defined and all is abstracted until I am looking at the ‘thing’ and it’s looking back at me. I am like a parent, but not in charge. I am outside of it, an ant with a grain of sugar on its back.

You can bite the sky from time to time, universal ideas which don’t really belong to anyone. I can feel that, weighing down it’s a heavy little thing and it shines, now. When I rub off my fingerprints it doesn’t matter because the thing itself is a fingerprint. I love the way I know what is going to unfold and the paper is strong. Accidents until they’re not.

Prescribed methods of thinking helps you to notice you’re more interested in the how, and not the why. Following a formula rather than following one’s nose. Tactility is important because it’s a grip on reality, it plants a person in the moment and there exists an opportunity for admiration. Like paper, if I spend too much time by myself, I’ll fold in and have to start again.

Elusive and impermanent, nothing! The plants are happy when they’re simply looked at, they feel cared for. Physically I’m problem solving by understanding structure and steel as structure, already that is everyday life. Long lasting work, everlasting love. Labour bears a tangible thing, those forms taken from drawings. Contained and confined.

Even time does that to you. Somehow there’s an emotional element in the otherwise cold and detached form, sort of mirrored by the way metal turns warm against your body. Time and connection are funny. That smear means more than you can imagine, I won’t move it. Metal wire can be so light to contain birds or so thick as to hold up the world. It can be that strong, now just think about that for a moment: thirty floors high up into the sky. Blink and you can make a skyscraper disappear. It’s not a destructive thought, it’s a magic one. Maze as metaphor.