



## TEMPLATES

### An edited transcript of recorded conversations between Rose Nolan and Augusta Vinall Richardson.

May — August 2023

**AVR:** It's kind of hard to get your head around the whole process of casting, I'm still struggling. So, they mould it and then they make it in wax. And then they put a shell over the top and pour in the metal and the wax comes out, and the metal [fills the space].

**RN:** Yes.

**AVR:** It's pretty crazy.

RN, Yeah, is it the lost wax process?

**AVR:** Yeah, yeah.

**RN:** Ha, yeah, I like that term. [laughing]. Where did it go?

**AVR:** It melted out, that's the thing.

**RN:** Ha, yeah, I know. I quite like that.

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**RN:** I was thinking, because you were talking about the Caves show being a freeform kind of thing, where it doesn't matter whether something lasts or not, why would you consider putting that work in? [gesturing toward bronze work]

**AVR:** Well, I guess I wanted to...I don't know if didactic is the right word, but it's a bit like "this is the process: so then we have the wax, then we have the bronze, and then we have the..." So maybe that's what I was thinking.

**RN:** You want it to be like that? You want to show the process?

**AVR:** I don't know, but I wanted to kind of have it in the corner there. I don't necessarily want to show it like this, but have the work in the corner there. And it be a bronze, or it might not be. I don't know. Maybe it doesn't matter in that sense.

**RN:** I think that probably if it's going to be in [the show], it needs to be there, regardless of whether it's a bronze or not. Not so much about "I do this, and then I do that."

**AVR:** Yeah originally, I think that's what I had in the back of my mind — what I was thinking. But I think I wanted to have it in, and I want to make it into a bronze. And then that's, why? I don't know. Because that was the first work, I was like, "I definitely want this because this is an original work." Then I've made a steel work based off these shapes, based off this form. I guess that's

what the show is talking to, the idea of sketches.

**RN:** So even though it's in a bronze form, it's still a sketch for something else?

**AVR:** But I mean, maybe that's where I went wrong. Not leaving it as a cardboard piece... allowing it to be cast and enter another realm. Maybe that's why it doesn't fit in? Because it announces itself as an artwork, rather than just being what it is?

**RN:** Well, I mean it's a really nice work. It's probably a matter of, as you make the work for the show, whether that ends up being something that fits in with everything else. As you're saying, this is a sketch for another work. Whereas some of these works are potentially works in themselves.

**AVR:** That's true.

**RN:** It's probably a matter of what opportunity it presents [for] you, I think, doing the show at Caves.

**AVR:** Well, it's definitely a free space, well meant to be more of a free-thinking space. Not resolved, I guess, not super resolved or anything. I was thinking these don't even need to be in the show, these works. [Gesturing to series of wall works on display in studio].

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**RN:** I was curious about the relationship between your use of steel and your life, [domestic] situation, relationship.

**AVR:** Ah, yeah.

**RN:** Had you had a hankering to work with metal? Or was that, in terms of your relationship with, sorry is it, Ben?

**AVR:** Yes, Ben.

**RN:** In terms of your relationship with Ben, whether that sparked your curiosity about that material and [those] processes. Because it sounds really full-on, what you actually have to negotiate. I really enjoyed reading the description of you physically in the workshop [wearing full protective clothing] dealing with gripping things, moving things around. I was wondering whether you wanted to explore metal and its potential before that?

**AVR:** Well, before I met Ben, or just when I first met him, I started making this giant sculpture when I was doing Honours at Monash. I needed a steel armature for it. I was always curious to do metal [work] in the last couple of years but had never really, except with my friend [Fairy Turner]. We were making a sculpture together and we had

a show and we did a bit of metal work. We hired out a space and did it there. It was really laborious and we didn't know what we were doing.

And then I met Ben, and I was like, "Oh, wow, you work with steel, let's make a work together, I really want to make a work together." We went to camp for New Year's down near Apollo Bay. It was this massive hike and it took hours and hours. We ended up not finding the camping spot in time, and just camped on the beach. There were these rocks that were all jagged and fitted all together. And I was like, "I want to make this sculpture." I had this big group show at Connors Connors coming up and I was like, "I want to make this steel sculpture..." [drawing the plan in the sand to show Ben what I was thinking]. And we made it, and kept going.

And Ben showed me how to do everything at his workplace at the time, which was a steel fabrication workshop in Heidelberg. The machinery and the space were — intimidating, but we were there mostly on weekends or out of business hours. It was really fun to work with the material. That's where the foundation of everything started. And then when Ben set up this space, [our current workshop] it has been obviously much easier and accessible.

**RN:** Because this space, is almost like an extension of your domestic space, in a way.

**AVR:** You could say that.

**RN:** I think about it relation to myself because my studios have always been connected to where I live. I could understand that connection, where there's easy access. You've got someone that you're working [closely] with. It's a very different environment [to a commercial workshop]. Who else did you mention [in your thesis]? Oh, [sculptor] David Smith. At that time, being a male artist, he would have felt very comfortable working in those [industrial] factory spaces as an extension of his studio. I can understand wanting to explore those materials because you had that ease of access.

**AVR:** Definitely. Because I think that if I had to figure it out myself, I would have got frustrated and sick of it, and left it.

**RN:** Or if you had to continue working in a more formal commercial space. That would have been hard.

**AVR:** Yeah, exactly. I feel like Ben has worked in those really [commercial fabrication and industrial welding spaces] welding pipes and doing huge, big, gross welding — super industrial —

and that kind of hyper masculine culture you are around [almost made him give up the trade].

**RN:** Yes.

**AVR:** Also, my ideas can evolve much quicker because he has all this knowledge that I could just be like, “hey, how do we do that?” It’s really made it an easier transition for me, working with the metal. If I hadn’t had that, I would have probably given up. Because it’s also really expensive if I had to actually pay him properly, for his time.

**RN:** Yeah, especially at that early point.

**AVR:** Yes exactly. And Ben has also really helped with fostering my connections to industry in a way. With introducing me to metal polishers, sand blasters, laser cutters and suppliers of bolts, steel and all the associated accessories you need working with metal. Because they all know him, and then they know me, through him. So that’s been really important to getting jobs done, because if I was a “nobody” or random individual wanting things, I think my jobs would be taken less seriously [because they’re smaller jobs, because my way of talking, my lingo around the work isn’t industry speak; because I present and identify as a woman etc. etc.].

And also I think the “artist’s hand”, the touch of the artist is really important, and by keeping the production of my work “in-house” so to speak, [either myself or Ben fabricating] I’ve been able to fully control the finishing. And I feel like that’s what’s hard about when you make stuff on a larger scale, you lose that. [Through having to delegate/loss of control on every detail] You would know about that.

**RN:** Yes, although, with big projects, say with more of the public art projects, I tend to work with materials that are already [used] in the public realm. Whether its terrazzo, metal, stone, [ceramic tiles], or paint I’m working with the builders’ or the architects’ materials for most of it. And it’s better if a sub-contractor [installs the work as part of the construction programme].

**AVR:** And you’re not trying to recreate your work on a larger scale. I think that’s the key, because you’re not trying to recreate the same work as what you made by yourself.

**RN:** Yeah, I’ve adapted something [directly to the situation, to the space]. The scale of the space is the prompt for the work that I might propose.

**AVR:** And I think that’s the key. The scaling-up is a frustrating area because it’s like, how do you navigate that, what do you do then? Definitely, Ben’s helped me so much. And just talking through

ideas as well. He has such a different perspective, a non-artist’s perspective.

**RN:** Yeah, that would be so great. It would just be perfect.

**RN:** Hi Ben, we’re just talking about you.

**BEN:** Hi!

**AVR:** How’d it go? [talking to Ben]

**BEN:** Yeah, it didn’t work. Just going to grab a couple of blankets. Nice to meet you.

**RN:** Yeah, nice to meet you too.

**AVR:** We were just talking about how much you help me with my work.

**BEN:** Not so much anymore because Augusta picked it up so quickly.

**RN:** It’s great.

**BEN:** Yeah, she’s a gun now.

**AVR:** Yeah, we had a huge fight. I had a show that I had no time for. And I wanted to make a steel work for it. [so, he helped me make it in a week]. It was not a good time. We almost broke up, I feel. And then after that he [said] “you have to make your work yourself.” At the time I didn’t have the money — I wasn’t selling works — so I didn’t have the money to pay him. Now I pay him for time [but] It’s not really like...

**RN:** Not the going rate?

**AVR:** I mean, it’s half...

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**AVR:** I hope it’s not too cold in here.

**RN:** No, it’s fine.

**RN:** I like your calendar with the days crossed off.

**AVR:** [laughing] Yeah. I know, I made it to be organised, but it hasn’t helped at all.

**RN:** [laughing]

**AVR:** I feel like writing lists, see there’s your... [gestures towards Rose Nolan *Working Models* room sheet/exhibition text from her Anna Schwartz exhibition 18 March–15 April 2023, sticky taped to wall].

**RN:** Oh, yeah. The list thing I like as well.

**RN:** Is it exciting when you get something cast?

**AVR:** Yes. Yes.

**RN:** What’s that feel like?

**AVR:** Oh, I don’t know. I guess it’s like a sense of relief because you’re like, this is not precarious anymore. But also, something being impermanent and fragile has a sense of freedom in a way?

**RN:** Not sure about freedom? Actually, for me, that sense of fragility and impermanence has a tension connected to it. It can be poignantly beautiful and have the potential for disappearance and failure at the same time.... perhaps that’s just me....

**AVR:** Mm yes that’s true. Failure feels for me so closely linked with precarity. It hasn’t fallen yet, its teetering. I guess my initial response is yeah, relief [because] it’s not precarious; could still be faux precarious though — unfirm, imperfect and I guess that’s what is so magical about the transposition of cardboard into metal, it captures that.

You know what’s funny about the whole money/casting situation is, that Jake at the foundry, at Malwood Foundry, is Ben’s friend, and I befriended him. He actually cast my stuff for really cheap or for free at the start. He was like, “I don’t know if this will work. We’ll just go with it.” So that roughness and the informality of it, and also being really involved in the process, has changed [my relationship with casting] I feel like I came to [casting] from a different perspective. Rather than going in and being like, “can you cast this? Yeah cool.” And then they come back, and it’s already done.

I haven’t had time to stop and think — “Why am I casting? What is it about it?” I’d really like to think about that more. At the end of my thesis I was wondering — that’s a whole other thesis — turning my attention to casting and what it means, the transposing [of one material to another]. Originally, it was just about a visual trick, transposing the cardboard to the metal and that whole relationship; the ephemeral and the permanent and the hierarchy between an art object being bronze and it definitely being art. Then a paper thing, “Oh, what is it? Is it art or not? Or is it just [?]” I started using steel, basically, because I felt like I needed that authority of the material.

**RN:** Mm, and a more direct relationship to [materials], working with the steel as opposed to that step in between [via casting].

**AVR:** Yeah. But before that, when I was making sculptural objects, I felt like I needed something to give the work authority outside of myself saying, “this is artwork, this is art.” And that’s where I was like, “Yes, I’m going to make stuff out of steel because that works for me,” I guess, the relationship between the metal and the paper and that thing...It’s hard not to compare the two materials and see them in terms of binaries — oppositions, opposite entities. However, working with both and thinking about it more, I’ve found that they’re more similar or have overlapping characteristics. In the sense

that I approach working with them in a similar way. They inform each other through this kind of non-hierarchical usage. If you know what I mean? I think it's more peoples' [collective social perception] of them that force them into "oppositional categories" — for want of a better word.

**RN:** I mean, it raises lots of things, the casting thing, but I understand what you're saying about a sheet of steel and a sheet of construction card, performing in a similar way for you. It's probably the functional associations (use, strength, longevity) that we judge them by that renders them in opposition to each other, but you have an architect like Shigeru Ban using cardboard tubes to construct buildings and those associations get turned upside down.

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**RN:** I guess my question, for you would be — how do you see my work? Where actually the cardboard is just the cardboard.

**AVR:** I see that as really strong.

**RN:** Do you see that as art?

**AVR:** Yeah, definitely.

**RN:** So, you don't think, "Oh, Rose should actually go one step further to make it permanent or to make it so that you can put a really big price on it or something?"

**AVR:** No, but I think that's what's amazing about your work, that you're dedicated to this. You have these rules or what I perceive to be as a set of rules or ways.

**RN:** Conditions or limitations.

**AVR:** I guess because I'm not you, I'm like, this is art. You have these bigger themes behind your work, but you can also just be enthralled with its materiality. Immediately, I'm like, "Yes, this is art".

**RN:** It's legitimate.

**AVR:** Because you say it's art.

**RN:** Yes.

**AVR:** And that's what I'm interested in with your re-inscription or reiteration: "I'm an artist, this is art." With the images and the books and everything that you've done, it's like, this is what it is.

**RN:** Yes. So, would it be a big, not risk, but would it be hard for you to think about doing, say, for example, the Caves show where it was all just your cardboard works — paper, cardboard, whatever it might be. Would that be hard for you to see as an okay place to land?

**AVR:** I think that's why I'm like, "Oh, got to have bronze in there", because the protective armour of steel/metal is gone. It's still an armour of some kind, which I felt acutely when I was doing the master's specifically. I was like "I need that protection" or whatever. It would be more vulnerable, but it would be okay. It would probably be more like the studio. I'm thinking of the gallery as an extension of the studio in some way.

**RN:** Yes, great.

**AVR:** So, it makes sense that it would be all unfinished.

**RN:** Well, you know, unfinished is one thing. They all look like completed works to me.

**AVR:** Yeah. Maybe unfinished is the wrong word. Fragile.

**RN:** Yes. I mean it's interesting talking about it in terms of the relationship to this idea of armour. Or the steel, having that sense of permanency, something that's going to be legitimate, that there's all those things associated that you're imbuing those particular materials [with].

**AVR:** Yeah. But also really, the funny thing about what I'm saying about steel sculpture is there's a lot of hideous steel sculpture out there that isn't art. It's just, I don't know, baubles, adornment.

**RN:** Mm yeah!

**AVR:** Building jewellery, as you said. Did you say that? Yeah. It's ridiculous that I have this idea. I guess that's speaking to my lack of, or earlier lack of knowledge about sculpture, specifically in steel sculpture, before I started making it myself.

**RN:** At the same time, if you just think about the fact that there's not a lot of artists working with steel in the way that you're actually working with it, in a contemporary sense.

**AVR:** Say that again.

**RN:** Well, what I think is really good about the fact that you're working with that material, is that there's not a lot of artists, that are actually working with steel so directly at this scale. They might be working with it by proxy if they happen to be doing a much larger scale work that someone else has to fabricate. Or they may be working with "found" steel objects and re-purposing them. I'm thinking of Bronte Stolz' men's urinal piece for their exhibition *Behavioural Sink*. But you're working with it very directly.

**ARV:** Yeah.

**RN:** And, so in that way, I think that's great. I think that's a really interesting. If I wasn't hearing you talk about the reasons why you might be wanting to use that

material, on face value, there's something really great about the fact that you are.

**AVR:** Yeah. Because it's okay to use steel if it's like a support for something else. Using in a similar way as it would in an industrial context, as an undercarriage or an armature. An example I'm just thinking of now is one of Nick Mangan's big coral, correlation things at Melbourne Now. [Nicholas Mangan, *Core coralations*, 2023] It's all steel frame and it's got this thing on the front. It's like a skeleton, I guess, but of our — *social world*.

**RN:** [laughs]. Yeah, our *social world*.

**AVR:** You know, it's not questioned or hidden, but it is somehow? It's ubiquitous.

**RN:** Mm, across our urban environment.

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**RN:** So, in your thesis you were talking about spending a long time, [smoothing the surface of the sculptures]. So which bit, are you taking about?

**AVR:** This surface. [showing sculpture piece of *A cause for reflection*, 2023]

They're all separate pieces. They all come off. Yeah, it's a bit heavy.

**RN:** Oh, amazing. It is heavy. That's so great. And then that sits on that.

**AVR:** Ben has helped me with these. [Steel pins that join each piece of sculpture].

You have to be quite good at welding for these bits. They're all like separate shapes that go on top of one another.

**RN:** And they all sit [together] so they're not going to topple over.

[metal clanging]

**AVR:** Yeah. They're all part of the same whole, although they're separate.

In a way, yes, like the jagged rocks at Apollo Bay, they "fit together" or rather they must "fit together" for the structure, the entity to stand up or stay up. They are all small parts, and they must do their bit to stop the structure from collapsing. That's why they're often precarious because I wonder about [civil] obedience and disobedience, following rules, not following rules and how that affects [our] ability to get along, so to speak, to fit together.

**RN:** Mm, that's great. I like this tension that's embedded in the work, through its design and process — of pieces holding together — or the potential for unruly failure. These steel works are allowed to be "precarious", you're embracing this. What I also like about the way in which

you're [making these] is that they're "unmonumental", made of these smaller components. I relate to it with my *Flat Flower Work*, 2004 — where it becomes quite a large-scale work, but it's made up of domestic-sized components that all fit together.

**AVR:** Yes!

**RN:** So, it can be scaled up or scaled down. I like that. One of the things I find is that a lot of the material and processes that I use, I always think of them in terms of their weight and being able to carry them.

**AVR:** Yeah, definitely.

**RN:** I'm not attracted to materials that are heavy, if I'm thinking of being alone in the studio. I want to be able to manage it, mostly myself. So, this idea of these components making up something that looks very weighty and chunky, I like the sense that you can build it yourself.

You talk about in your thesis the impact of [steel/the workshop], of this reciprocal impact that was happening, through the process of making and all those things that you were having to negotiate... you refer to getting physically stronger...

Reflecting on that, I wonder if that is a kind of limiting thing for me? [Only] working with materials that I can negotiate. And so, could there be a whole other way in which my work might develop and expand, where I put myself into a situation, say for example, like you have. Where you've had to negotiate a different language, set of rules, a different space, a different way you've physically had to deal with material. And then those materials and everything that goes with it, has had an impact on you. Not only in the way you make your work, but you also allude to it having made an impact on you, in the world?

**AVR:** 100%. I feel more confident because I have some kind of clarity on how I am supposed to behave. How the world is set up to behave in a particular way. And I feel like the workshop space is a microcosm of that, of this, larger world, or larger experience.

**RN:** Which you're seeing as being fundamentally, male-structured. Patriarchal. You feel now as if you have a better understanding, as if you've had some kind of insight into what those norms, those rules are?

**AVR:** Yeah, yes.

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**AVR:** Yeah, working with steel, in the

workshop my physical abilities have grown over time. So yes, as things have gone on, its expanded what I can do on my own. So that potential is always expanding or growing if you like. But at the moment, this is the biggest scale I can work off by myself. [*A cause for reflection*, 2023] Then this big one, I'm having an existential crisis about. [*Gestures toward In Service of, In service to (IK)*, 2023].

**RN:** What material is that?

**AVR:** Corten steel. It's one mm thicker than what I'm used to working with. This is 2mm and this is 3mm. It's just that 1mm makes such a huge difference. It's hard to mould and it's very, very cumbersome. It's huge. When you think of this kind of steel, this is like Inge King. This is like, her thing. It's funnily for a show at La Trobe [Art institute, Bendigo] about her. It's not a homage exactly but based around a public sculpture of hers at La Trobe [Inge King, *Dialogue of Circles*, 1976].

I actually like it as a floor work. [rather than vertical].

**RN:** Does it stay like that, what do you do to the surface?

**AVR:** That's been my crisis because it [Corten] actually goes orange. It gets sandblasted and then that activates the surface. Pete at the sandblasting place is going to chuck some Hydrochloric acid on it, so it goes off a lot quicker.

**RN:** Yes, because it's the rusting that happens. Would you like it to go orange?

**AVR:** Mm I'm undecided. I guess it's going to happen anyway...eventually. This is what it looks like. [showing an image of it vertical] It's got these little sleigh leg things on it. [UC beams].

**RN:** I really like it on the ground.

**AVR:** Oh, yeah, right. It's like a tomb.

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**AVR:** To go expand on what you mentioned earlier — about what you've said about having this productive limitation you've assigned yourself, it kind of speaks to your wider practice which stems from a pragmatic, practical pace. You don't have to rely on anyone else. You don't have to rely on your financial position [for example] or anything else.

**RN:** Yes, that's true. Yes, I think there are reasons for it. And I think it's the way in which I approach my work, this expansion and contraction thing happens. Where something can be really small, but it can expand to take on

[space]... I'm really interested in scale as a strategy in the work.

**AVR:** Yes, yeah.

**RN:** It's not like I might work in a particular way where my work is always on a small scale and that's part of its condition. It does expand. It has the ability to shift [from the discrete to the monumental].

**AVR:** And that's what I found so enchanting about the spiral work [*Big Words — To keep going, breathing helps (circle work)*, 2016-17] where all the circles fit together, and then the panels of circles fit together.

**RN:** Yes, and then they pack right down, into two boxes.

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**RN:** It's like someone's scratched their name in there. Which is quite good [laughing]

[Referring to *A cause for reflection*, 2023].

**AVR:** My idea was to scratch them with a drill bit.

**RN:** Do you know the *Monument Against Fascism*? By Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz. It was made in the 1980s for Hamburg. It was a 12-metre lead clad, one-metre [by one metre] column that was located in the centre of the city. It had attached to it, a metal pen, pencil. They wanted people to sign their names or write something in support of a movement against fascism.

[Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev- Gerz *Monument Against Fascism*, 1986, 1 lead-clad column with aluminium structure — 12 x 1 x 1 metres, 1 text panel, 7 tones].

There'd been a proliferation of fascist groups. So, people at standing height would be writing up to the height that they could reach. And then when that [space] was filled up, they would lower it into the ground.

**AVR:** Wow. That's cool.

**RN:** Each time that happened, they would lower it further and further into the ground. And I think it took about seven years where the lead plate of the column was completely lowered all the way into the ground.

**AVR:** Woah.

**RN:** When you go there now, there's the story behind it in many languages. And just a one-metre by one-metre square that you can stand on.

**AVR:** Oh, wow. Okay.

**RN:** So It's gone. They need to bring it back though. That was the 80s and look where we are now. But what a beautiful idea. Amazing.

**AVR:** But I would have thought after the thing was all full, then they'd bring it back up. But I guess that's the whole [idea].

**RN:** I think it was really about that idea of this monument against the enemy. That we're going to manage to build this so we can bury it. We're burying it now.

**AVR:** That's so amazing.

**RN:** What an amazing idea for a public monument. And when I saw the scratching, it just reminded me. Yeah incredible.

**AVR:** I feel like you can just keep going and going and going [referring to the finished surface of the steel sculpture], but it's never done. I wanted to scratch into it more with a drill bit.

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**AVR:** Yeah, it was just taped boxes together and I was trying to do it in the least amount of gestures possible [*Window III (anthropomorphic figure)*, 2022, aluminium]. Just trying to create a shape as simple as I could. Whereas this has lots of glue and texture, [*Pathways*, 2022 and original work — *Maquette II*, 2020] and it had a box around it, except that didn't come out in the casting. I just got rid of it. And that's what I like about the casting process, when you're so involved in it, you have this thing and it doesn't work out, so you just adapt. So, I feel like that's hard to do when you're handing it over to someone.

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**RN:** I'm thinking about that sense of freedom. It's as if that step of casting allows you freedom in how you might choose to make the work, because it's not going to remain in its [original] state. As you said just now, you had a piece cast in aluminium, and you were able to make it with the least amount of intervention — it's just tape and cardboard. And so that casting process, the transformation that makes it "legitimate". The step in the middle, is the liberation or freedom for you, in the making. Whereas if you had to consider the work being finished, to be the final work as the cardboard piece, I wonder?

**AVR:** I think you definitely have to like... I guess what I write about in my thesis about that logical linear thinking, [steel and the workshop space], it

definitely requires a different level of consciousness, whereas working with cardboard and drawing is super intuitive, in the moment.

**RN:** Yeah. But that [intuitive] moment's only existing because you know, well, not so much with your drawing, but in that making [with paper], it's existing because you're not having to consider it as the final work. You know that it's going to disappear with that further step of being cast.

**AVR:** Yeah. Yeah.

**RN:** Because if you were going to make the cardboard works as works in themselves, would you still have that sense of freedom?

**AVR:** Maybe I'd feel unsatisfied, because that's all there's ever going to be.

**RN:** Yeah, okay. And that's not quite enough.

**AVR:** Yeah, sometimes it's not.

**RN:** Because you're curious about that process of transformation from one material to another.

**AVR:** Yes. And it's different every time.

**RN:** Okay, so there's a legitimacy through the casting, but there's also a nice sense of chance and randomness that might come through it as well.

**AVR:** Yes! there is freedom in the randomness. The sense of chance and the mistakes that are part of the casting process are inspiring. You can't plan for them or account for them, it just is what it is. And that changes the work again. And I think that's what I found really exciting about the casting process in the beginning.

**RN:** A lot of artists might make the maquette or whatever, and then send it, give it to the foundry, and then come back days later, and it's, "Oh, we've got this new thing." That doesn't satisfy it for you. You need to be working in the studio or here in the workshop. That sense of a primary connection to materials and process is really important for you.

**AVR:** Yes, I think so. I guess that's what is interesting to me — the process as well as the final work itself. It's not just a means to an end. A desired outcome.

**RN:** That makes sense to me. That's why I asked my initial question "What is it about casting?" That actually makes more sense to me, being involved with the material in the process.

**AVR:** Yes.

**RN:** I think you were talking about the bronze in the sense of capturing, almost

like you're anchoring something, you're capturing it in a form that's actually going to last for a long time. At the same time though, something had to be destroyed for that to occur, so there's a sense of loss about that for me.

**AVR:** Yes. They both can't exist in a way, the work as a cardboard work and as a bronze. It's one or the other.

**RN:** So, there's a different sense of time attached to the works, through this transition of states. The provisional, taped cardboard works exist in potential and speak to a future state, whereas the heavier bronze works have a sense of history, and exist as a record of the past.

**AVR:** In a way. Yeah, that's true.

**RN:** Which is quite nice, this slippage between past, present, future.

**AVR:** Which is something I hadn't thought of. Definitely. With your reshaping of your constructions...

**RN:** They look great actually.

**AVR:** How do you feel about them, so much time on?

**RN:** What do you mean?

**AVR:** I guess they've changed, the work's changed? Or how...just physically as well?

**RN:** It's a bit like showing the [*White Trash Constructed*] works at Guzzler [in December 2022]. I'm really enjoying the fact that a new generation can see them, that they're not just tucked away in my storage space. In that instance, I had such a strong impulse to install those particular works in that space, with that beautiful hard, dirt floor.

**AVR:** You mentioned that you had some of them at home. Did the gallery loan out ones from private collections for the exhibition?

**RN:** No, these are all available. These have been in my storage space.

**AVR:** Oh ok, yeah.

**RN:** So how do I feel about them coming out? It's really nice to see them again. I look at them and think, "how did I make those?" They're really rough. There are big blotches of glue and scratches on the Perspex and all sorts of things. I love that sense of freedom about them. They've stood up well 30 years on. You know what I mean? It's like they're full of [my] life lived then, the way they're made, the colours, the decisions that I made reflect back on my life then; my relationships; what was going on; and the context within which they were made. They look fresh, in their own, really messy way.

**AVR:** Yeah.

**RN:** They were messy to start with, and the messiness has carried through well. It's helped with their ageing 30 years on, I think.

**AVR:** Totally. I guess that relates to what we were talking about when you first arrived, that time of being alone, time alone.

**RN:** I do just see all these things as open. I don't think "Oh, gee, that work was really good and I should be doing it again." They're open categories in a way. I look at them and it reminds [me] that I really enjoyed making those [works]. The recent *Working Models*, have a connection back to some of that work, with that sense of freedom.

**AVR:** I remember thinking at the Guzzler show, it was really nice to see the leaking of the glue and all that stuff. Those details are quite nice. And yeah, they were a bit discoloured, but it wasn't an issue. It added to it, which was nice to know [when thinking about my work].

**RN:** It's been a nice opportunity to do all that, to bring them out. After how many years — maybe I've said before — you just accumulate so many works.

**AVR:** Yes.

**RN:** And you get to a point where you just think "They want me to make new work, but I've already got this really good work, it's still there, that no one's seeing." And so, for artists now, we're probably more likely to donate these works to collections because there's no point them just being in my studio forever.

**AVR:** But yeah, having said that about them, I'd love to see them in real life, the scale and everything. I feel like things really need to be seen in real life. I mean, it's no surprise that something visual should be seen in person.

**RN:** These have got quite a strong bodily sense to them.

**AVR:** Yeah.

**RN:** It's like a torso.

**AVR:** Yeah. Because they're a bit bigger than they seem or photograph in a way?

**RN:** And if they're hung at a certain height, standing next to them they have quite a presence, they project off the wall into space. And then the *White Trash* works came after these [*Coloured Constructed Works*]. They started to touch the floor or move into corners. The way in which the [cardboard] constructed works were made also influenced the much larger hessian banners, where they're made from cut pieces [of hessian] that were glued and stitched together. So, there is a relationship between the different categories of work.

**AVR:** And when you were making, the "wall" works, for want of a better word, I forgot what they were called.

**RN:** The *Constructed Works*.

**AVR:** Yeah. Because with the models you've made more recently, they have a use in mind or a faux use or an idea of utility or inhabitation. But the *Constructed Works* don't, they're more self-referential or symbolic.

**RN:** They have their own logic in a way. They grew out of painting, a two-dimensional pictorial space. Then they started to project off the wall into a three-dimensional space. That really just came through initially, the building up of collaged pieces of cardboard, and then starting to see how I could create more rudimentary sculptural forms. It was literally through that process in the studio of things starting to grow and starting to influence the next work. I found what you could do in one work you'd then go, "okay, well, now I can do this and I've got this bit of Perspex and I'll stick that there."

**AVR:** And you feel like 30 years on, it's more about... I guess it's reached beyond your... well, I guess it's more about... it feels like from my point of view, it's like from internal to external, like space... purpose and architectural space and inhabiting an artwork, rather than the artwork inhabiting the space or something? Like the works map your thinking, from interior [psychological] spaces, worship/belief/faith — these works [*Constructed Works*] seem like monuments to your belief about art in general, like they are alternative and active sites of worship. As you mention the roughness, the messiness — they're so alive and heaving with activity.

**RN:** Yeah, I agree. They assert themselves for sure. Interesting that you'd describe these works as "sites of worship". I probably see the coloured *Constructed Works* more like "icons" as opposed to "monuments" ...but they do, or did have, a playful relationship to my religious upbringing. The central cruciform structures always ended up resembling a religious cross rather than the modernist cross of the grid [laughing].

**AVR:** And, as the work has gone on, it's slowly unfurled from the wall into the exhibition space, and then out on to the street. Kind of like your initial inspiration — the constructivist and the Russian avant-garde and their efforts to break into society at large with their ideas/protests that are primarily artworks; and something else too.

**RN:** Yes! As a young artist, I was so excited by the artistic and political energy and utopian ideals of this early 20<sup>th</sup> century period in Russia.

**AVR:** This makes me think of the wonderful publication and artwork of yours, the work is, *Big Words (Not Mine)* *Read the words "public space" ....*, 2013. The book records it or celebrates the original work? The book is another work... do you see it that way? I borrowed the publication from the state library and read it in the reading room they have there.

**RN:** Oh, great. Yeah, for me it's definitely another work, a 576-page artist book! It re-presents '*Big Words (Not Mine)* ...' in a new form; it's not a reproduction of that artwork. The artist book provides a new and different experience of the work, in a more portable form, with a wider distribution beyond the frame of the exhibition and gallery space.

**AVR:** Distribution of propaganda ...?! The text is so amazing. A call to action. And the work is just perfect. The layering of text with the abstract shapes, and it being made into bunting. It's just great. I remember getting a buzz putting it all together in my mind. [Having not seen the original work at the time it was first exhibited].

**RN:** Yeah, so maybe in those [constructed] works there was a contained spatial relationship and energy and forms all mashed together. I was always interested in how — when I was installing my works, particularly if it was a work that was made up of multi panels — I installed the works to take on [architectural] space in a particular way. To bring attention to the relationship between the object, space and audience.

**AVR:** Yeah, true. Sorry in my head, I'm just zooming between these 93' works and then the most recent show that you've had at Anna Schwartz in my head, I'm just zooming between those two. But then there's like, yes, obviously...

**RN:** A whole lot in between.

**AVR:** But I guess of course they have a relationship because it's non-verbal... Oh, yeah, no actually, there's lots of words. There are lots of words in *Working Models*, but it's different to your *Word Works* for instance, as these [*Working Models*] are more subtle, the form is the form and the words, the text sits alongside as part of the work — you can process it as "advertising", as "packaging" or you can choose to see it as "Rose Nolan speaking". Whereas with the *Word Works* the text is its very reason for existing in its particular form. It's found material but its form is determined by Rose Nolan. Does that make sense?

**RN:** Yes, I know what you're saying, one appears more emphatic in its form, colour and directness of address. Whereas, it's all found materials, it's found text,

it's found colour and design, they're all mashed together in the *Working Models*. In a way, the freedom that I referred to in making these works is also like a temporary escape, a return to play and chance. I've always collected boxes and packaging. They have this ready-made potential of three-dimensional forms [volume] that I don't have to try to make myself. You know what I mean? I think the difference with the *Working Models* is that they inhabit space in a different way, where I've had to negotiate them from multiple sides. Whereas with the [early constructed] works, they grew out of the space of painting.

**AVR:** Yes.

**RN:** They had this attachment to the wall as their starting point. The *Working Models* have been freed up in a way. I'm probably still working with some of them where I'm really just thinking of them as two-dimensional. Some of them feel like they have a front and a back to them. Someone did pick up on the way I installed them — you had to walk along the front and then walk along the back of the bench. You couldn't walk around them.

**AVR:** Yes. You couldn't observe them as an individual entity. They are a part of a larger whole.

**RN:** They were forced to be both in a way and that was partly to do with solving an issue of display. I really didn't want the plinth. The idea of the shelf, which I was interested in, probably pushed them too much into a two-dimensional view.

**AVR:** Yes, ornamental.

**RN:** Yes! I thought maybe that's not quite right either. And then I really liked this idea of maybe, open shelves in some way. I'd seen [images of] a beautiful three-part exhibition of Gordon Matta-Clark's work called *Out of the Box* 2019–20, in Montreal. Three curators each picked up on an aspect of his work, and one of these was his personal library. I loved the installation for this part *Material Thinking*, using generic metal laboratory or library shelving units for display. Some of [the models] had worked quite well, up high on a shelf, but I thought, maybe that will be annoying for people. I thought it was a good solution in the end, the long bench with at least two shelves. That was the way I solved it.

**AVR:** Yeah, because you do kind of want to pick them up. But I agree, the little plinth-y things, plinths, I hate plinths.

**RN:** Mm yeah, I know. That's where your work is so perfect because you're creating your own plinth.

## TEMPLATES

Rose Nolan

Augusta Vinall Richardson

Edition of 200

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Augusta Vinall Richardson is represented by **The Commercial, Sydney**.

Augusta Vinall Richardson and Rose Nolan respectfully acknowledge the Traditional owners of the lands where these conversations took place and where this publication was produced. Sovereignty was never ceded.





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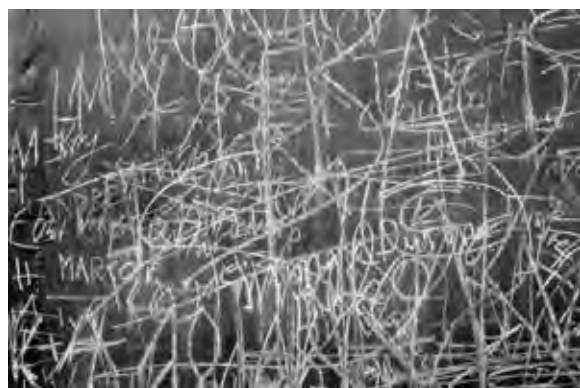
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21b



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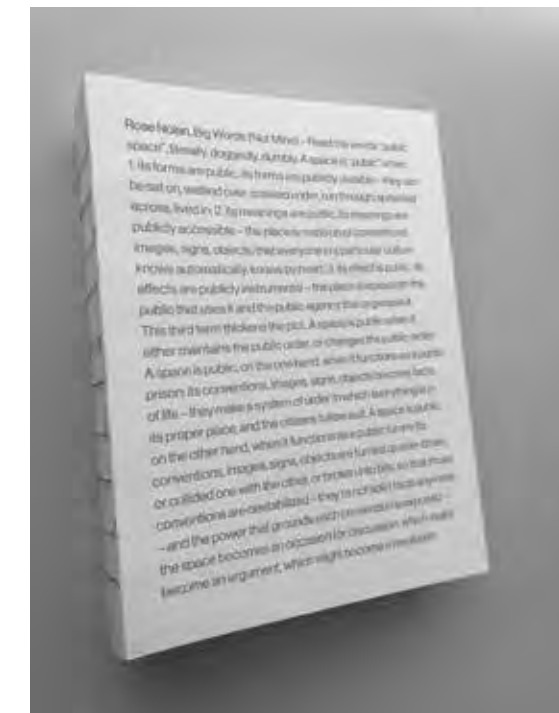
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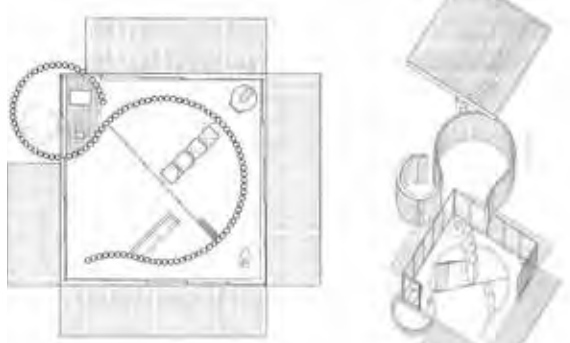
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06b



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01. Augusta Vinnal Richardson, *Fitting in*, 2023, bronze, patina, 24 x 14 x 5 cm, edition 1 of 2. Exhibited as part of *The Commercial* at Sydney Contemporary 7-10 September 2023. Photography Christopher Crocker.

02. Rose Nolan, detail *All ALONGSIDE OF EACH OTHER* 2023, (Two parts) Terrazzo floor work 140 x 19 metres; Polished stainless steel, folded sheet metal, paint, 22 x 1.2 x 0.15 metres. On permanent display Sydney Metro Concourse, Central Station, Sydney. Photography Rose Nolan.

03. Rose Nolan, *Signature Style* 2023. Acrylic paint, cardboard, found packaging. Overall dimensions 32 x 32 x 32 cm. Image courtesy Anna Schwartz Gallery. Photography Christian Capurro.

04. Rose Nolan, *Muse Apartments (Premium Mania)* 2023. Acrylic paint, cardboard, found packaging. Overall dimensions 43.5 x 25.5 x 29 cm. Image courtesy Anna Schwartz Gallery. Photography Christian Capurro.

05. Rose Nolan, *Adobe House* 2023. Cardboard, found packaging. Overall dimensions 25 x 28 x 25 cm. Image courtesy Anna Schwartz Gallery. Photography Christian Capurro.

06.a) 06.b) Shigeru Ban, *Paper house* 1995. Japan. Approximately 10 x 10 meters with 110 paper tube columns arranged in an S shape, creating various inside and outside spaces. 80 paper tubes bear the lateral forces and 10 tubes carry the vertical load. Image courtesy Shigeru Ban Architects.

07. Bronte Stoiz, *Untitled (urnal)*, 2023. Stainless steel, 24 x 120 x 30 cm. Exhibited as part of *Behavioural Sink*, 2023 at Laila, Sydney June 9 – July 17, 2023. Image courtesy of Laila Sydney. Photography Laila Sydney.

08. Nicholas Mangan, installation view *Core corallations* 2023. Exhibited as part of the Melbourne Now at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Melbourne 24 March – 20 August 2023. Image courtesy of NGV Australia. Photography Sean Fennessy.

09. Augusta Vinnal Richardson, *A cause for reflection*, 2023. Stainless steel, 170 x 43.5 x 33 cm. Exhibited as part of *LIGHTMOVING: Mitch Cairns, Jazz Money and Augusta Vinnal Richardson*, 3-23 December 2022, The Commercial, Sydney. Photography Ben Stratton.

10. Augusta Vinnal Richardson working on *A cause for reflection*, 2023 in the studio. Photography Eilane Banda.

11. Augusta Vinnal Richardson, *Box Sculpture (Brick to brick, end to end)* 2022. Stainless steel, stainless steel hollow bar, 192 x 61 x 30 cm. Exhibited as part of *LIGHTMOVING: Mitch Cairns, Jazz Money and Augusta Vinnal Richardson*, 3-23 December 2022, The Commercial, Sydney. Photography Ben Stratton.

12. Augusta Vinnal Richardson, installation view *Teeter*, December 3-23, 2021, Connors Connors Gallery, Melbourne. Photography Issi Austin.

13. Augusta Vinnal Richardson, work in progress (*A cause for reflection*, 2023). iPhone photo.

14. Rose Nolan, *Flat Flower Work* 2004-2011. Synthetic polymer paint, cardboard. Dimensions variable. Collection of Heide Museum of Modern Art. Image courtesy Heide Museum of Modern Art.

15. Augusta Vinnal Richardson working on *A cause for reflection*, 2023 in the studio. Photography Eilane Banda.

16. Augusta Vinnal Richardson, *In Service of, In service to (IK)*, 2023. Corten steel, stainless-steel nuts and bolts, 213.5 x 125.5 x 80 cm. Exhibited as part of *Circles of Dialogue* 16 August – 5 November 2023, curated by Amelia Wallin. La Trobe Art Institute, Bendigo. Image courtesy La Trobe Art Institute, Bendigo. Photography Leon Schoots.

17.a) 17.b) Augusta Vinnal Richardson, work in progress (*In service of, In service to (IK)*, 2023). iPhone photo.

18. Inge King, *Dialogue of Circles*, 2009. Welded steel, paint. Permanent installation Moat Theatre, Latrobe University, Bundoora Victoria. Photography Robin Whittle.

19. Rose Nolan, *Big Words-To Keep Going Breathing Helps (circle work)* 2016-2017. Acrylic paint, hessian, embroidery thread, Velcro, steel. Dimensions variable. Installation view. The National Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia. Image courtesy Anna Schwartz Gallery. Photography Felicity Jenkins.

20. Augusta Vinnal Richardson working on *A cause for reflection*, 2023 in the studio. Photography Eilane Banda.

21.a) Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz, *Monument Against Fascism*, 1986. Permanent installation Hamburg, Germany. 1 lead-clad column with aluminium structure, 12 x 1 x 1 metres, 1 text panel, 7 tones. Image courtesy of the artists.

21.b) Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz, detail *Monument Against Fascism*, 1986. Image courtesy of the artists.

22. Augusta Vinnal Richardson, *Window*, 2021. Cardboard, tape. Approx. 15 x 20 cm. Photography Augusta Vinnal Richardson.

23. Augusta Vinnal Richardson, *Window III (anthropomorphic figure)*, 2022. Aluminium. 21 x 17 x 3.5 cm. Exhibited as part of *LIGHTMOVING* 3-23 December 2022, The Commercial, Sydney. Photography Augusta Vinnal Richardson.

24. Augusta Vinnal Richardson, *Pathways*, 2022. Bronze, patina, 25 x 18 x 5.5 cm. Exhibited as part of *LAZARI* 8 August – 3 September 2022. Hayden's Gallery, Melbourne. Image courtesy of Hayden's Gallery. Photography Christopher Crocker.

25. Augusta Vinnal Richardson, *Maquette II*, 2020. Foam core board, cardboard, PVA glue, tape, clear glue, recycled tissue paper, acrylic paint, custom stainless-steel brackets, 26.5 x 19.5 x 6 cm. Exhibited as part of MFA Graduate Exhibition, Monash University Caulfield, 4-12 February 2022, Monash University Caulfield. Photography Christopher Crocker.

26. Rose Nolan, installation view *Coloured Constructed Work* 1993. Oil paint, cardboard, Perspex, plastic tubing, 85 x 65 x 40 cm. Image courtesy Sydney Sydney. Photography Jessica Maurer.

27. Rose Nolan, *An Orange and Dark Green Constructed Works* (1995). Exhibited at Guzzler Melbourne, 3-5 December 2022. Image courtesy Guzzler, Melbourne. Photography Christian Capurro.

28. Rose Nolan, *Low-down White Trash Work* 1995. Oil paint, cardboard, plastic tubing, staples, masking tape, 109 x 48 x 113 cm. Image courtesy Guzzler, Melbourne. Photography Christian Capurro.

29. Rose Nolan, installation view *Working Models* Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne. Exhibited 18 February – 15 April 2023. Image courtesy Anna Schwartz Gallery. Photography Christian Capurro.

30. Rose Nolan, detail *ENOUGH/NOW/EVEN/MORE/ SO* 2022. Munro Community Hub, QVM Market, Melbourne. Image courtesy City of Melbourne. Photography Bryony Jackson.

31. Rose Nolan, detail *YOU/ME/US/ HERE/NOW* 2022. Hallam Station, Melbourne. Image courtesy of The Commercial. Photography Matthew Stanton.

32. Rose Nolan, installation view *YOU/ME/US/ HERE/NOW* 2022. Hallam Station, Melbourne. Image courtesy of The Commercial. Photography Matthew Stanton.

33. Rose Nolan, detail *Big Words (Not Mine) Read the words "public space"*, 576-page section sewn artist book, 23 x 17 x 5.5 cm. Published by Negative Press, 2017. Image courtesy Rose Nolan.

34. Rose Nolan, *Big Words (Not Mine) Read the words "public space"*, 576-page section sewn artist book, 23 x 17 x 5.5 cm. Published by Negative Press, 2017. Image courtesy Rose Nolan.

35. Gordon Matta-Clark, *Out of the Box* 2019-2020. Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Generali Foundation Collection, 13 November 2021-6 March 2022. Image courtesy Museum der Moderne Salzburg. Photography Rainer Iglar.

36. Installation view *LIGHTMOVING: Mitch Cairns, Jazz Money and Augusta Vinnal Richardson* 3-23 December 2022, The Commercial, Sydney. Image courtesy of The Commercial. Photography Matthew Stanton.

37. Augusta Vinnal Richardson, *Box Sculpture (Brick to brick, end to end)*, 2023. Cast aluminium, aluminium plinth, stainless steel bolts, 230 x 61 x 30 cm. Image courtesy of the artist and The Commercial. Photography Matthew Stanton.

38. Photo of Augusta taken by Rose in August's studio, iPhone photo, 2023. Photography Rose Nolan.