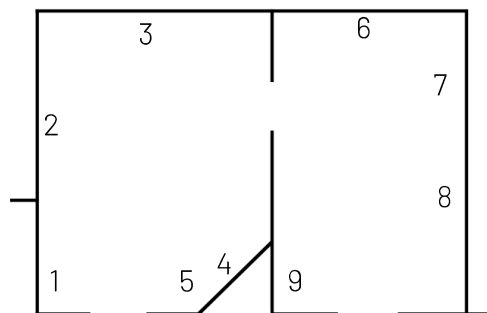


I mean; you could try the ladder?

Ailsa Waddell



Ailsa Waddell is a contemporary artist based in Boorloo Perth. In 2020 Ailsa was awarded a BA from Curtin University, and has since exhibited frequently including at PSAS, Pig Melon, and in Fremantle Arts Centre's print award. Beyond their own artistic practice, Ailsa contributes to the local community as a volunteer at artist run galleries and for the Fremantle Biennale.

"I guess it's just that feeling you get at the pit of yourself; you allow the swell to catch up with you. ADHD is less a puddle; more a comfortable swell. I think about ladders a lot as a point of reference not because of their practical nature, but more so everything that could go wrong. Sounds like ADHD to me lol; (a ladder that "kind of works"). A lot of the work I make revolves around intimacy and closeness in my interpersonal relationships as someone who often struggles to navigate it. Ladders also kind of revolve around closeness; an urgency to get close. For me, ladders in this sense are less about their practicality and more so about the imagery of a journey or a progression. A task or interaction is rarely straightforward and often involves twists, turns and puddles to negotiate along the way. Ladders sometimes surface to give you a step up, but they aren't as simple as they appear."

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| 1 <i>Option 2</i> , 2022, mould of glue and borax from a garden hose, builders line, painters tape. Nfs | 6 <i>I wish I could say it came to me in a dream. I was just watching Futurama</i> , 2022, oil on canvas, utility cord. 700 |
| 2 <i>A warm, salty drink trickles from a leaking tap</i> , 2021, oil on canvas, utility cord. 300 | 7 <i>Open the door; make yourself toast</i> , 2022, oil on canvas, utility cord. nfs |
| 3 <i>Option 3</i> , 2022, mould of glue and borax in a garden hose, builders line, tape. nfs | 8 <i>Awaiting a small ladder to guide me inside; (the exit's hard to come by)</i> , 2022, oil on canvas, utility cord. 500 |
| 4 <i>I'm by no means an expert; I'm a tree in this performance</i> , 2021, oil on canvas, utility cord. 800 | 9 <i>Option 4</i> , 2022, mould of glue and borax from a garden hose, builders line and tape. nfs |

Breakfast 18/01/2022

Climbing into an empty basin; the footpath falling behind you begins to melt out of sight. A round; perfectly circular structure sits upon a bed of moss, overgrowing from the weathered tiling at the base. The wall around is smooth; uninterrupted. You find a small, discarded ladder; signaling you to climb inside.

You plant your feet on cold; smooth concrete. The walls seem translucent, only a blurred reflection is enabled in your vision. *Starting to panic; still no exit in sight; falling down on your back; an empty feeling; silence; nothing in; nothing out.*

Squeeze your eyes tight; blink 3 times. You reach into your pocket; feeling for a tiny gritty circle. *A little one.* A faint appearance of a ladder appears in your sight as you draw the object out of your pocket. The ladder recedes as you put the object away. *Lift the circle to the tip of your tongue; a tangy and familiar acidity returns to your gums.*

Walls begin to fade; a small resemblance of a path returns to your memory. The familiar light from your bedroom curtains return you home. *Open the door and cook some toast.*

– Ailsa Waddell

Goolugatup Heathcote acknowledges the Bibbulmun as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we stand and pays respect to the Whadjuk people, and Elders past, present, future.

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