

Bob Bicknell-Knight

Asset Flip

30th May - 1st July 2024, Thursday to Saturday, 2 – 5 pm or by appointment

SEAGER, Distillery Tower, 2 Mill Lane, London, SE8 4HP, UK



SEAGER presents Asset Flip, a solo exhibition by artist and curator Bob Bicknell-Knight, the final exhibition in the Matchmaking four-part series at the gallery exploring how artists make work with and about video games.

Investigating the tools used to create video games as a vehicle for speaking about hyper-capitalism and a general feeling of malaise towards the contemporary moment, Asset Flip reflects upon the impending climate crisis and 24/7 hypercapitalism through the lens of prefabricated assets used in video game development.

Each exhibition in the Matchmaking series is accompanied by a reading list of books that has inspired the ideas behind the exhibition, as well as several books selected by the exhibiting artists that inform their practice, available to read within the gallery space whilst sitting on a custom-built bench. As the series of shows has continued, the separate bookshelves have been slowly filling with books, becoming an archive of the four exhibitions.

Within video games, an asset is any resource that is used in the development of a video game, from 3D models to sound effects and pieces of code. An asset flip is a type of shovel-ware (a term for low budget, poor quality video games, released purely for monetary gain) in which a video game developer purchases pre-made assets and uses them to create numerous permutations of generic games to sell at low prices. These games, albeit unpopular, are still regularly bought by unsuspecting buyers, and have been accused of flooding video game markets. Although asset flips are condemned by the industry, the use of pre-made assets, however, is becoming increasingly commonplace in video game development. In the exhibition at SEAGER pre-made assets, appropriated from asset stores, are explored through sculptures, paintings and films, commenting on our 24/7 working lives and the acceleration of global production processes.

A series of paintings throughout the gallery explore how video games are created and the climate crisis. The works are hybrid paintings, beginning as digitally fabricated images within the video game development software Unity. The images are then printed onto canvas, stretched and painted onto with acrylic paint, with the offline artist's hand interacting with the original digital image. The painting method explores the tension between the digital and physical sides of Bicknell-Knight's practice and is a collaboration between his digital and physical working methods.

The paintings in the series depict several animals, from a chicken in *DREAD* (2024) to a deer in *EXPIRE* (2024), at the precise moment that they're falling to the floor, never to rise again, accompanied by words associated with destruction and decay. Everything you see in the paintings, from the animals to the trees, has been purchased as a prefabricated (prefab) asset. The assets in the paintings are simple 3D models with low polygon counts, like animals and plant life, usually appearing in multiple places across different video games. The use of these models, purchased by game developers rather than being made themselves, is a contemporary coping mechanism harnessed to accelerate the production process of virtual experiences. The paintings use the idea of the prefab as a vehicle for speaking about how the world is in an unstoppable free fall towards a global climate crisis.

Several floor and wall-based sculptures appear throughout the gallery; physical reproductions of video game assets, 3D printed and sporadically presented within gridded structures. The sculptures range from mouldy mushrooms, like *CRASH* (2024), to life-size visualisations of deceased animals, with *ANNIHILATION (Grid)* (2024) depicting a cat, exploring ideas related to the political climate in the UK and our rapidly decaying world. Each of the sculptures in the series is printed with no perimeter, with the different objects shedding their outer, simplistic armour, to explore the inner beauty and intricacies of these seemingly uncomplicated objects and the ways they're used within video games.

These sculptures are produced using Polylactic Acid (PLA), a thermoplastic polyester made from plant starch. By producing versions or iterations of both animals and plants in this material, the sculptural works are effectively transformed back into the original natural elements that they are visually depicting. Like the paintings by Bicknell-Knight, the sculptures are emblazoned with words associated with destruction and decay, asking the question, at what point do we escalate? Many of the sculptures are positioned within structures made from painted MDF, replicating the digital space that creators first encounter when beginning a project in Unity; a grey and white grid.

Utilising the same 3D models of animals present in the paintings and sculptures, two films and an accompanying soundtrack dominate one half of the gallery. In *Procession* (2024) these animals, now animated, are seen walking from one end of the screen to the other in an endless march, towards the future and their own demise. *Final Exit* (2024) depicts this more literally, with the same animals repeatedly falling to the digital floor as they are pulled in and out the screen, slicing their bodies to expose their empty innards.

Exploring ideas surrounding our present, hyperconnected world, *Asset Flip* considers our collective unease for the near future.

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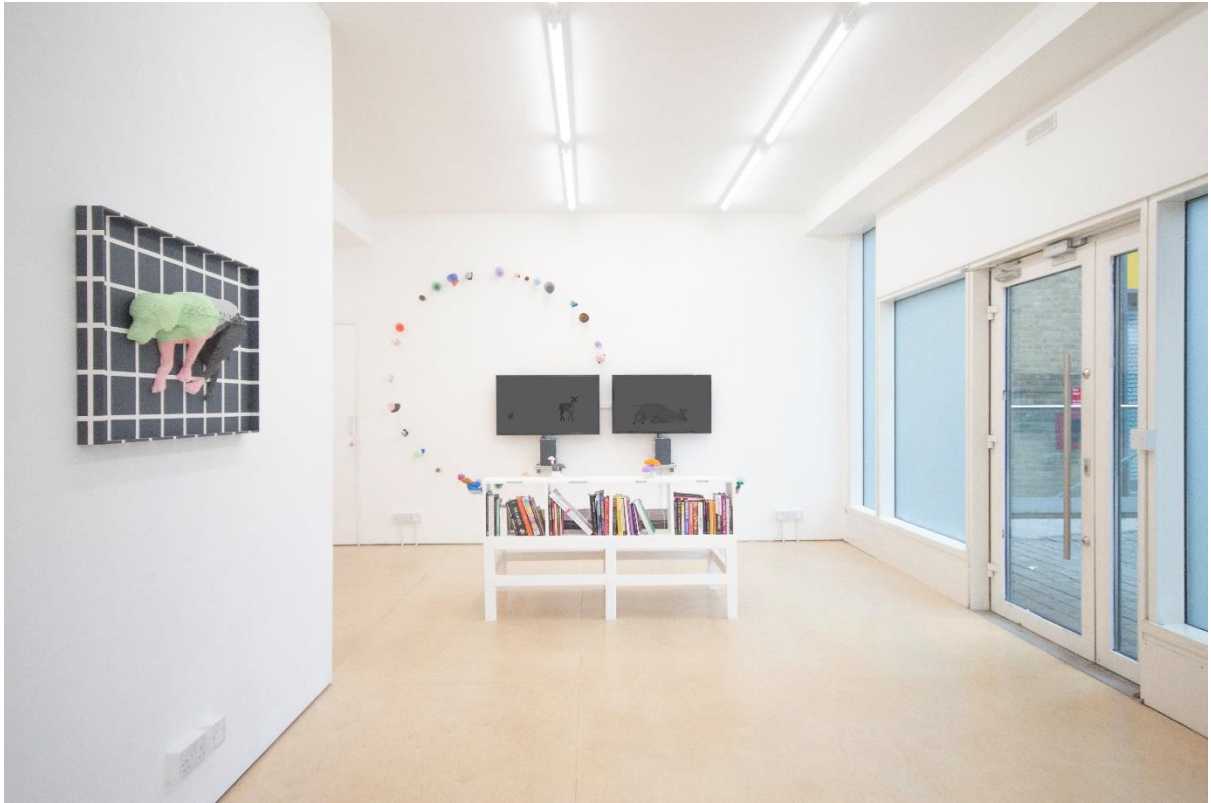
Reading List:

- Birnam Wood by Eleanor Catton, 2023 (recommended by Bob Bicknell-Knight)
- Everything You Ever Wanted by Luiza Sauma, 2019 (recommended by Bob Bicknell-Knight)
- Blood, Sweat, and Pixels: The Triumphant, Turbulent Stories Behind How Video Games Are Made by Jason Schreier, 2017 (recommended by Bob Bicknell-Knight)
- Press Reset: Ruin and Recovery in the Video Game Industry by Jason Schreier, 2021 (recommended by Bob Bicknell-Knight)
- Seven Empty Houses by Samanta Schweblin, 2015 (recommended by Bob Bicknell-Knight)
- The Men by Sandra Newman, 2022 (recommended by Bob Bicknell-Knight)
- Sex Robots & Vegan Meat: Adventures at the Frontier of Birth, Food, Sex & Death by Jenny Kleeman, 2020 (recommended by Bob Bicknell-Knight)
- Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury, 1953 (recommended by Bob Bicknell-Knight)

- Sum: Forty Tales from the Afterlives by David Eagleman, 2009 (recommended by Bob Bicknell-Knight)
- Roadside Picnic by Arkady Strugatsky and Boris Strugatsky, 1972 (recommended by Bob Bicknell-Knight)
- Capital Is Dead: Is This Something Worse? by McKenzie Wark, 2019 (recommended by Bob Bicknell-Knight)
- Piranesi by Susanna Clarke, 2020 (recommended by Bob Bicknell-Knight)
- All Art is Ecological by Timothy Morton, 2021 (recommended by Bob Bicknell-Knight)
- The Employees: A workplace novel of the 22nd century by Olga Ravn, 2020 (recommended by Bob Bicknell-Knight)
- Bit Rot by Douglas Coupland, 2016 (recommended by Bob Bicknell-Knight)
- Uncanny Valley by Anna Wiener, 2020 (recommended by Bob Bicknell-Knight)
- Beyond Lies The Wub: Volume One Of The Collected Stories by Philip K. Dick, 1999 (recommended by Bob Bicknell-Knight)

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Bob Bicknell-Knight (b. 1996, Ipswich, UK) is a multidisciplinary artist and curator working with digital media producing films, paintings, sculptures and installations. His practice comes from a place of cynicism, exploring power structures that proliferate online and in new forms of technology, with a particular interest in the automation of work and hyper-consumerism. He's influenced and inspired by our pre-apocalyptic present, climate collapse, virtual worlds and 24/7 hyper-capitalism. Selected solo exhibitions include Sunday School at Number 1 Main Road, Berlin, DE (2023); Insert Coin at CABLE DEPOT, London, UK (2023); Non-Player Character at Klaipėda Exhibition Hall, Klaipėda, LT (2023); Digging History at INDUSTRA, Brno, CZ (2021); Eat The Rich at Galerie Sono, Paris, FR (2021); It's Always Day One at Office Impart, Berlin, DE (2021) and Bit Rot at Broadway Gallery, Letchworth, UK (2020). Bicknell-Knight runs the online curatorial platform isthisit?, and has previously curated exhibitions at SEAGER, London, UK (2024); The Art Station, Saxmundham, UK (2023); [Senne], Brussels, BE (2021); Harlesden High Street, London, UK (2019); Annka Kultys Gallery, London, UK (2018) and arebyte Gallery, London, UK (2018).



Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



Bob Bicknell-Knight
PRE-APOCALYPSE (Grid), 2024
PLA, MDF, acrylic paint, varnish, glue, screws
57.2 x 81.2 x 16.4 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
PRE-APOCALYPSE (Grid), 2024
PLA, MDF, acrylic paint, varnish, glue, screws
57.2 x 81.2 x 16.4 cm



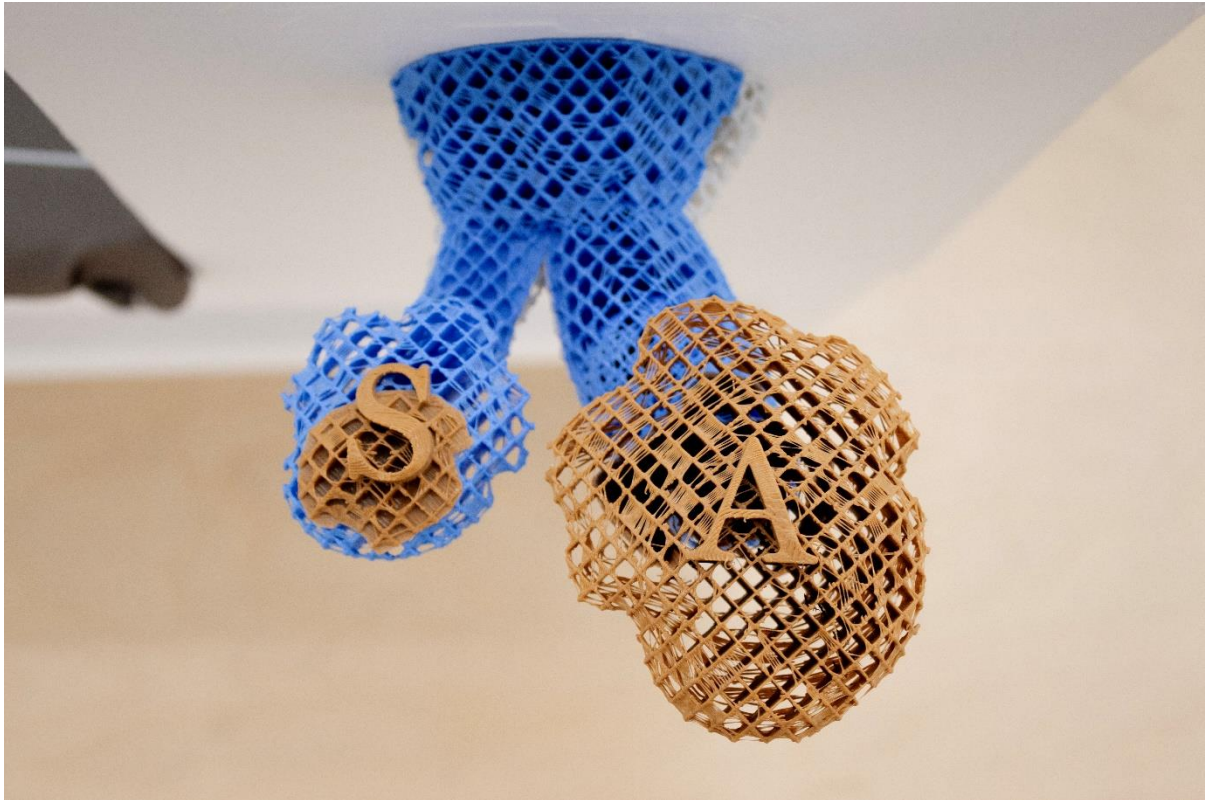
Bob Bicknell-Knight
PRE-APOCALYPSE (Grid), 2024
PLA, MDF, acrylic paint, varnish, glue, screws
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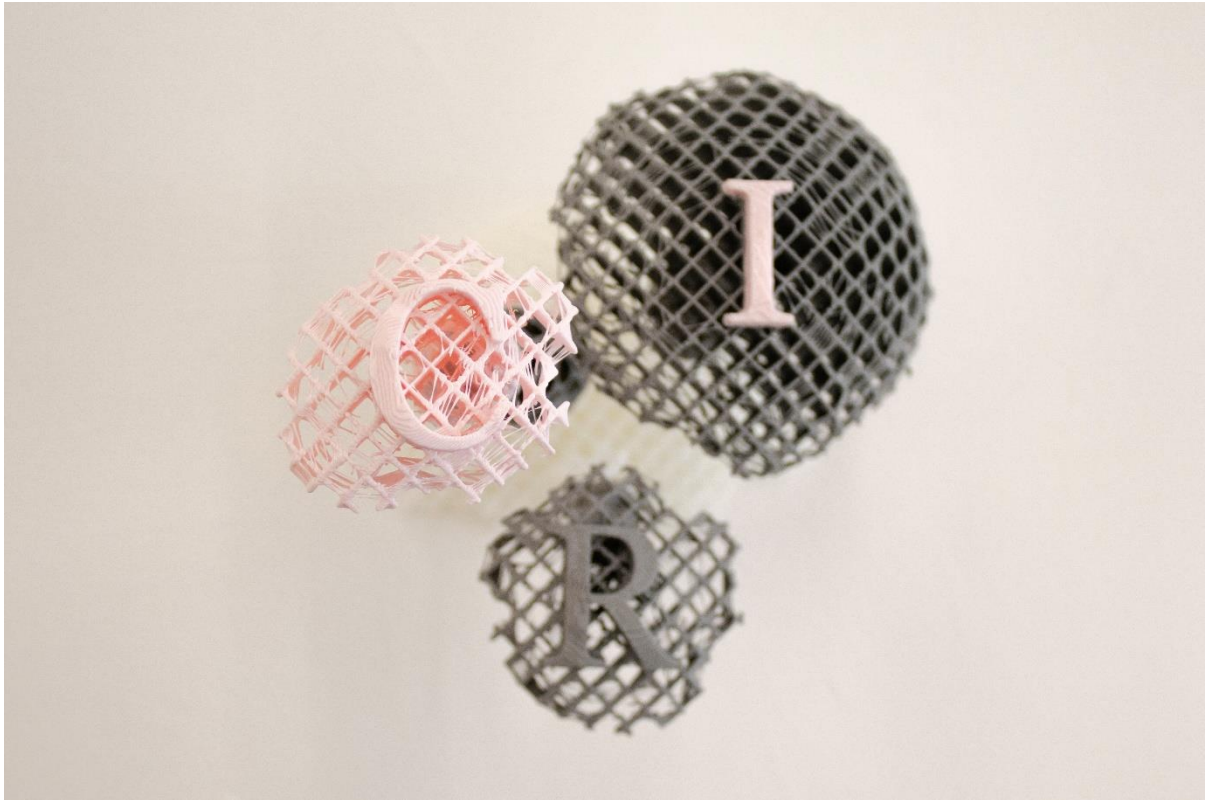
Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



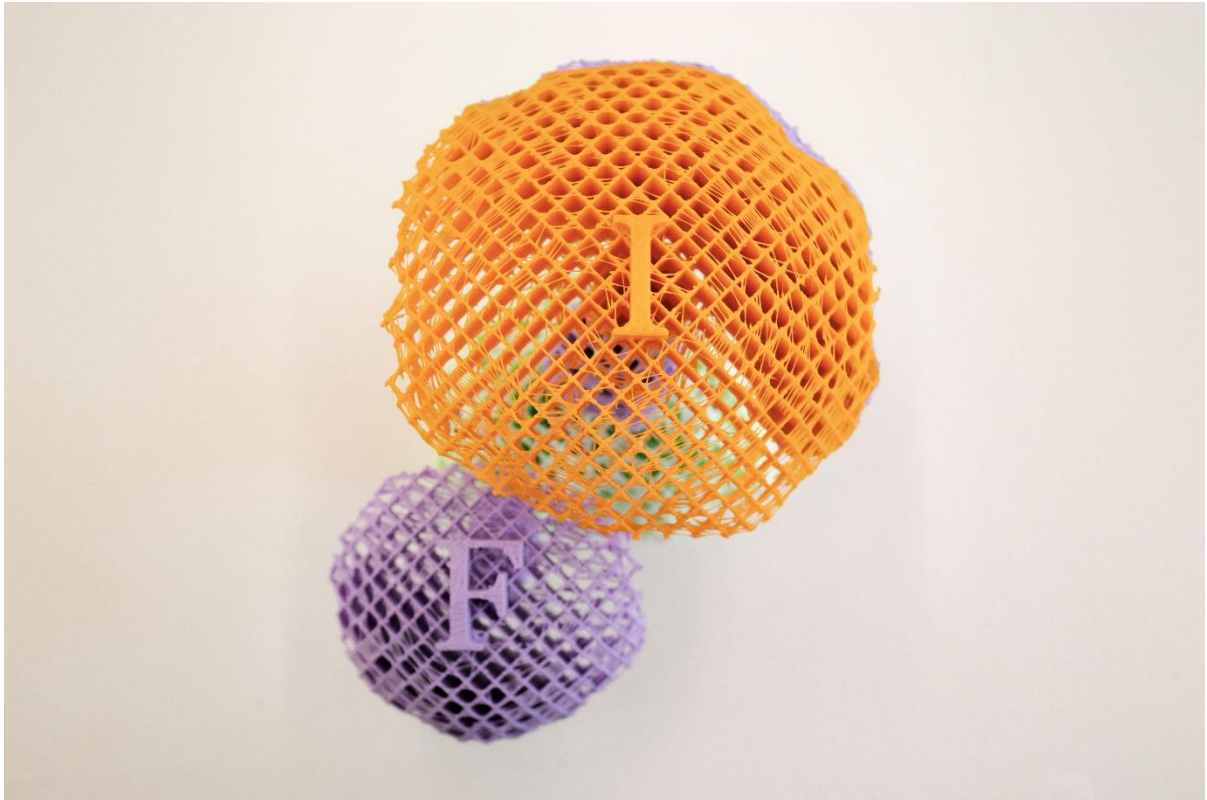
Bob Bicknell-Knight
SACRIFICE, 2024
PLA, glue, screws
Dimensions variable



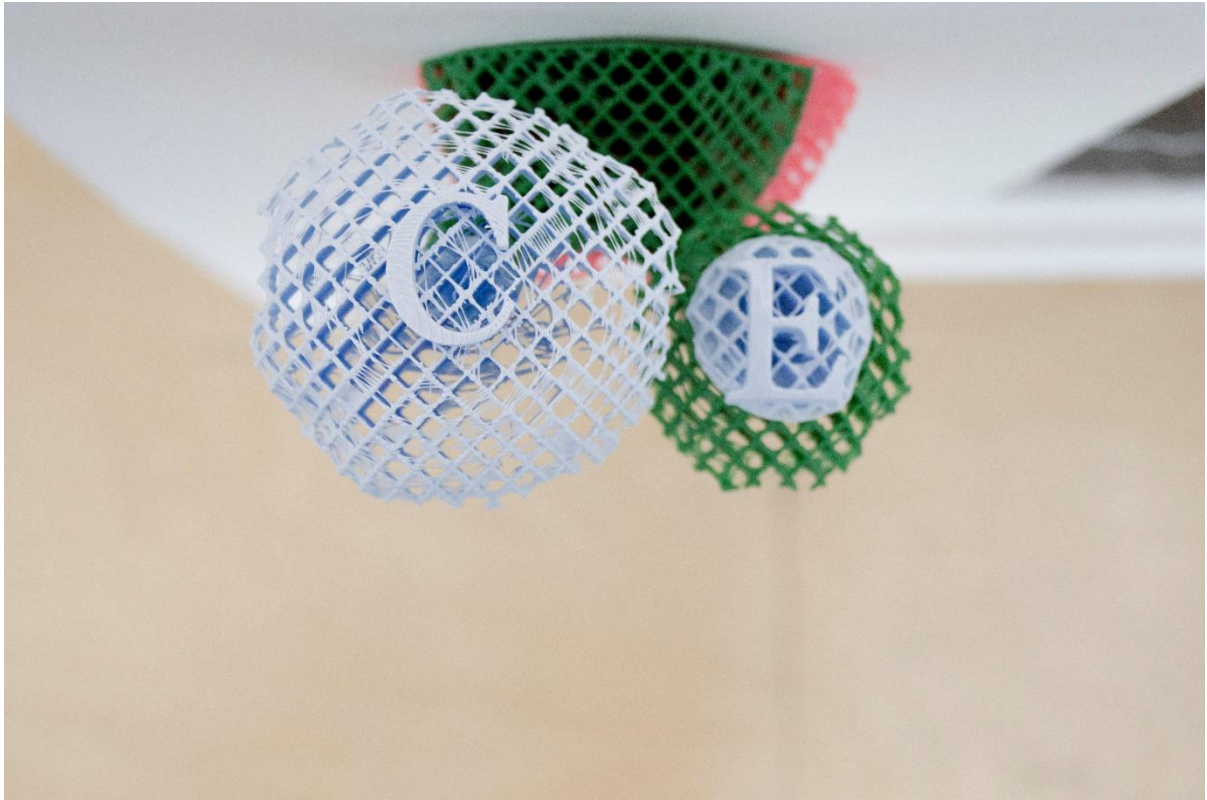
Bob Bicknell-Knight
SACRIFICE, 2024
PLA, glue, screws
Dimensions variable



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PLA, glue, screws
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Bob Bicknell-Knight
SACRIFICE, 2024
PLA, glue, screws
Dimensions variable



Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



Bob Bicknell-Knight

Procession, 2024

4K video with sound, USB drive, PLA, flat screen TV, extruded aluminium, screws, bolts, speaker, acrylic paint, varnish, miscellaneous cables

8 min 53 sec

Watch the film by going to <https://youtu.be/yiTgxWSqZg?si=v0QaRpgz4o6pJPFZ>



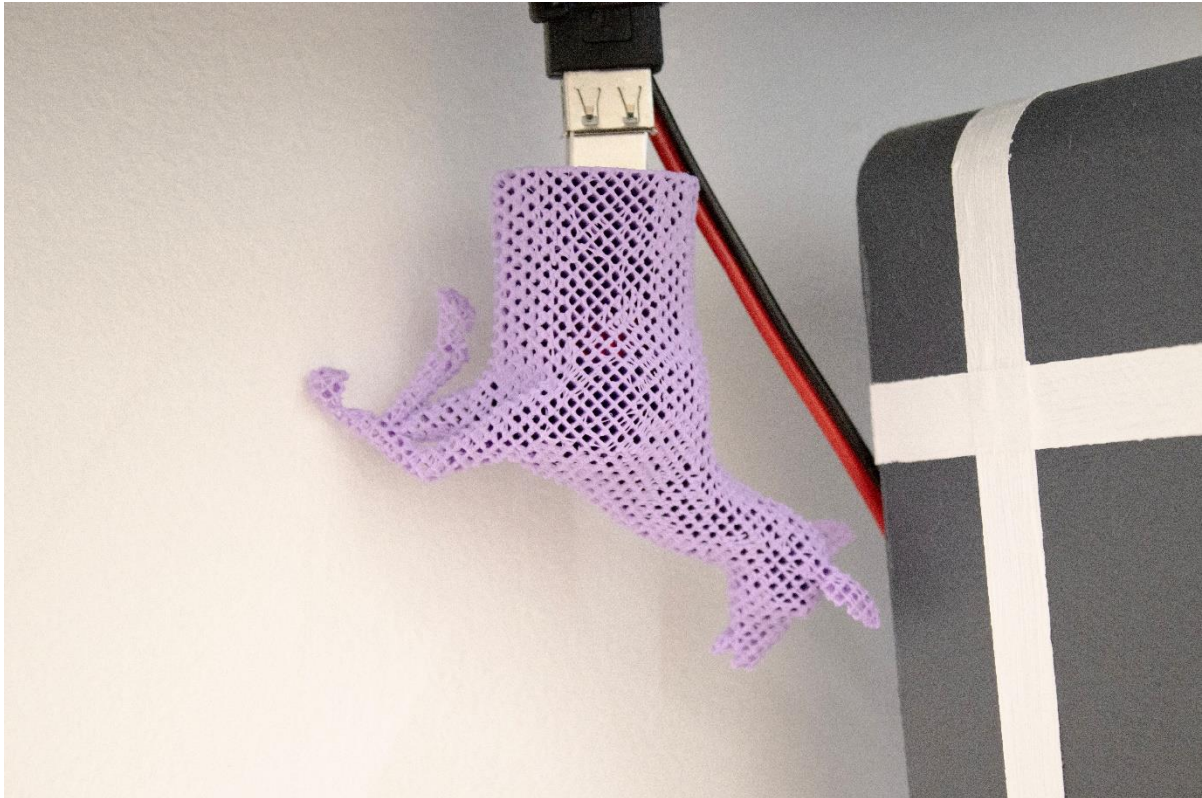
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Bob Bicknell-Knight

Final Exit, 2024

4K video with sound, USB drive, PLA, flat screen TV, extruded aluminium, screws, bolts, speaker, acrylic paint, varnish, miscellaneous cables

3 min 57 sec

Watch the film by going to <https://youtu.be/75udqDYtZbo>



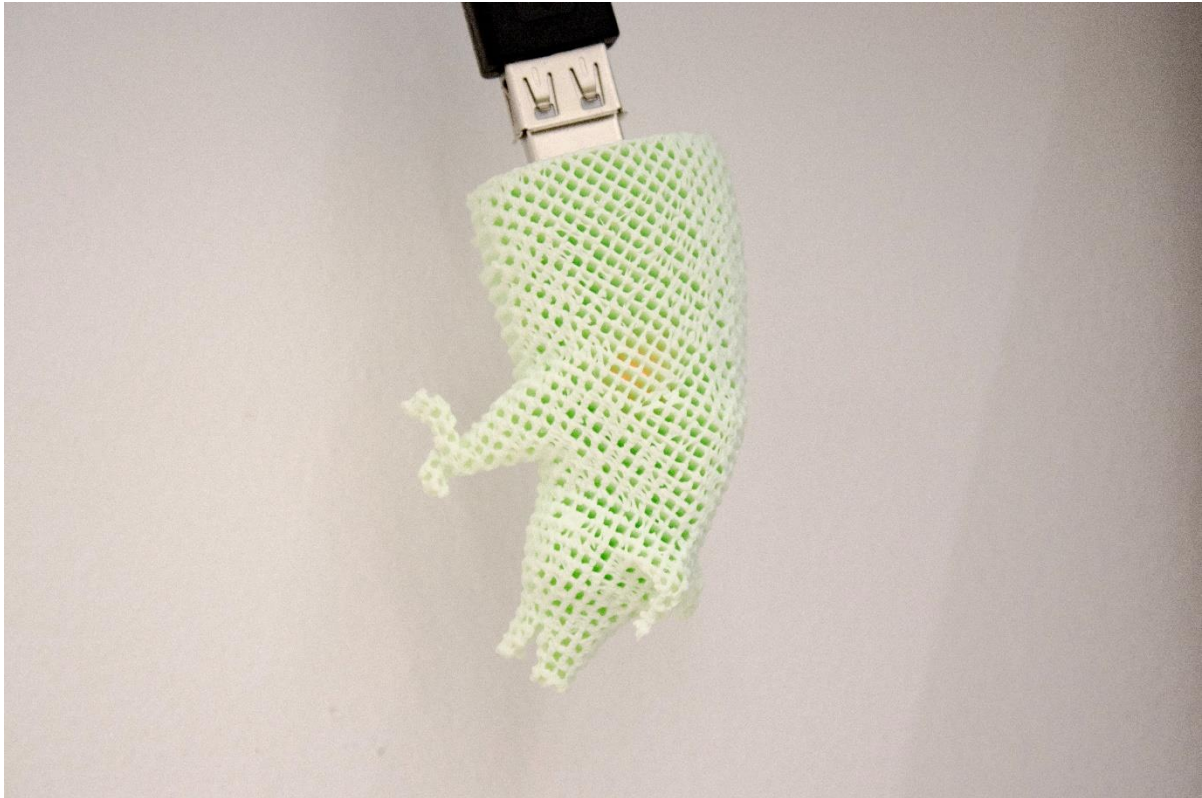
Bob Bicknell-Knight

Final Exit, 2024

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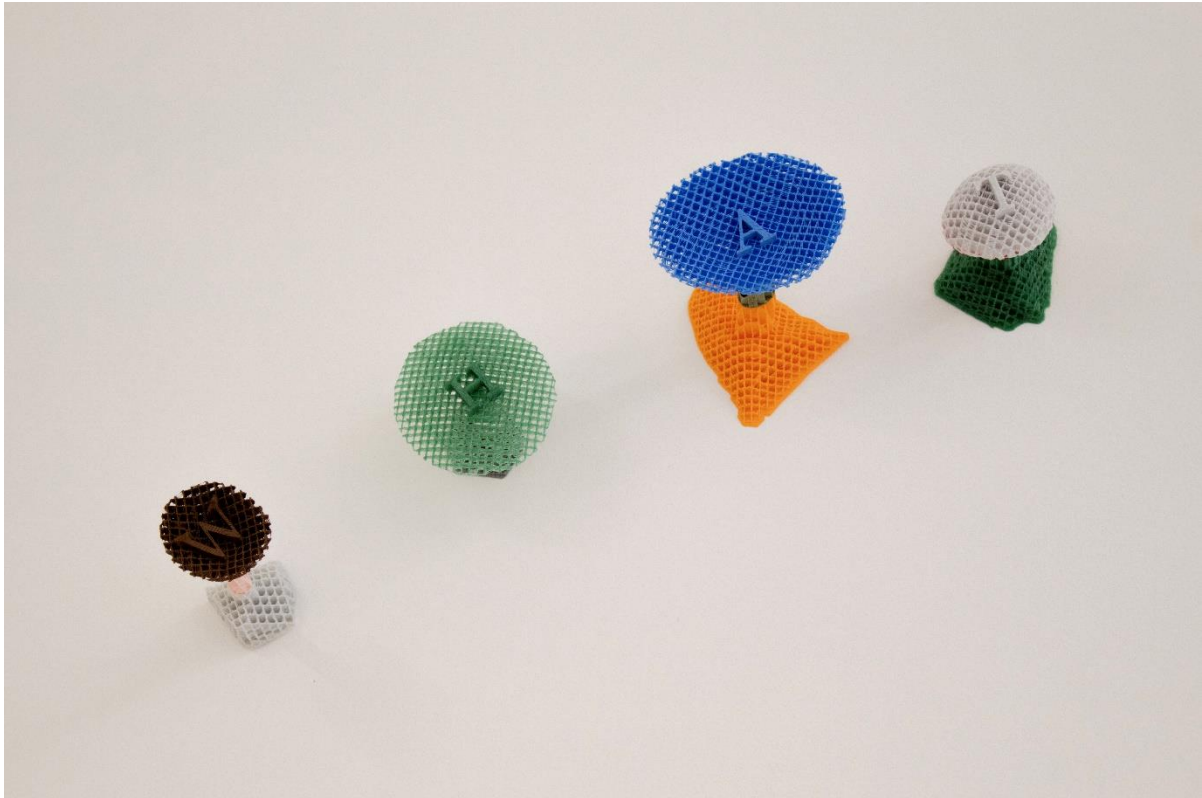
Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



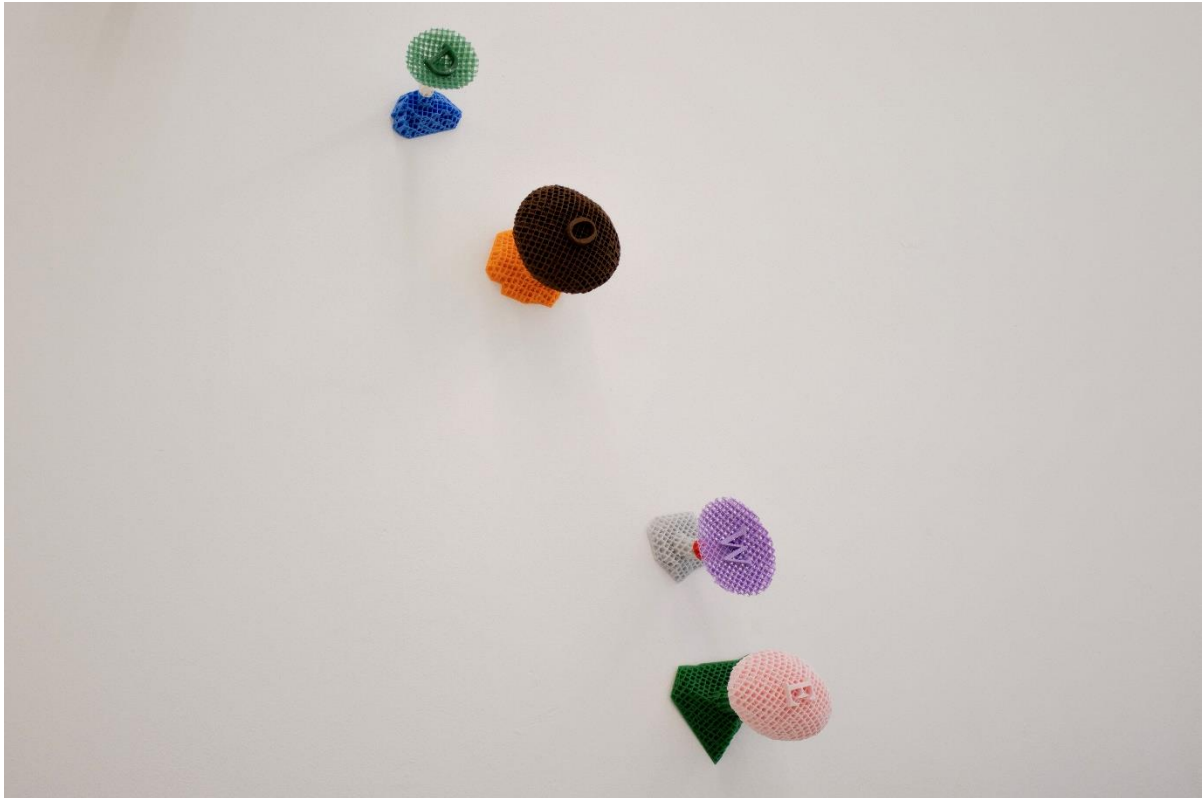
Bob Bicknell-Knight
Fairy Ring (AT WHAT POINT DO WE ESCALATE?), 2024
PLA, glue
Dimensions variable



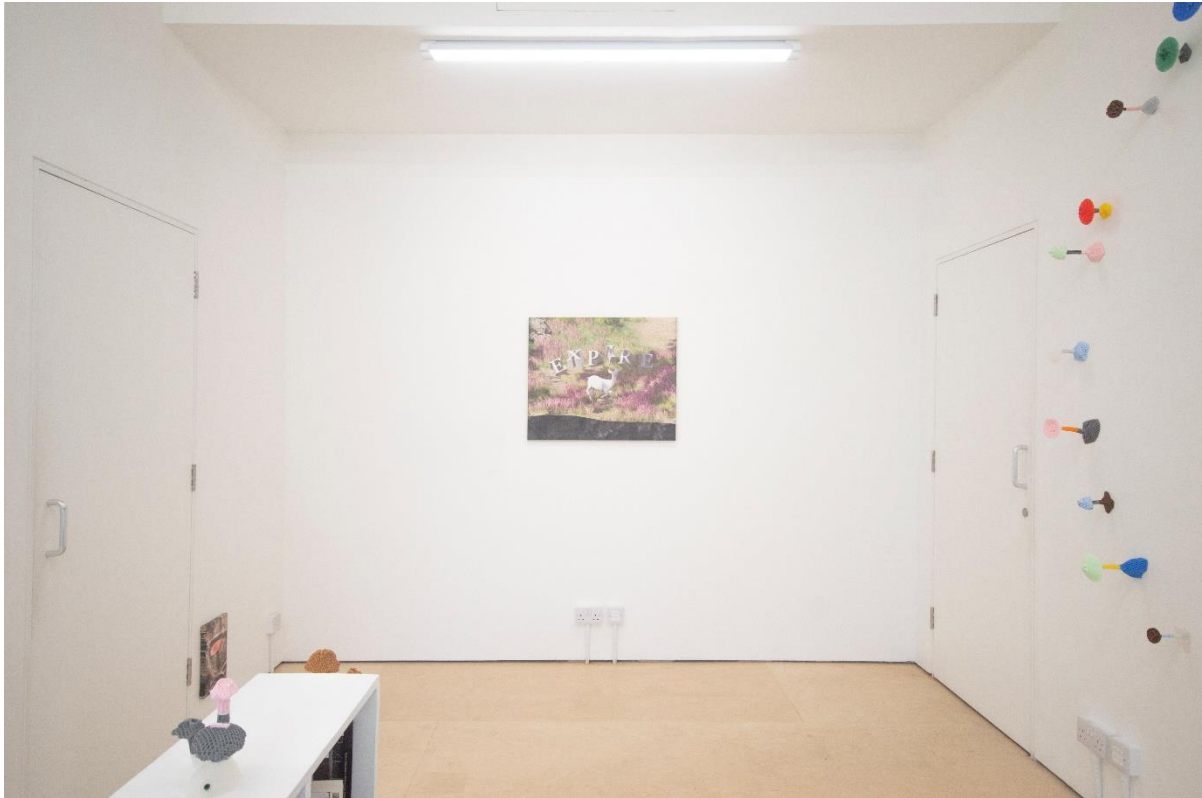
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PLA, glue
Dimensions variable



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PLA, glue
Dimensions variable



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Fairy Ring (AT WHAT POINT DO WE ESCALATE?), 2024
PLA, glue
Dimensions variable



Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



Bob Bicknell-Knight
EXPIRE, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
65 x 80 x 2 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
EXPIRE, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
65 x 80 x 2 cm



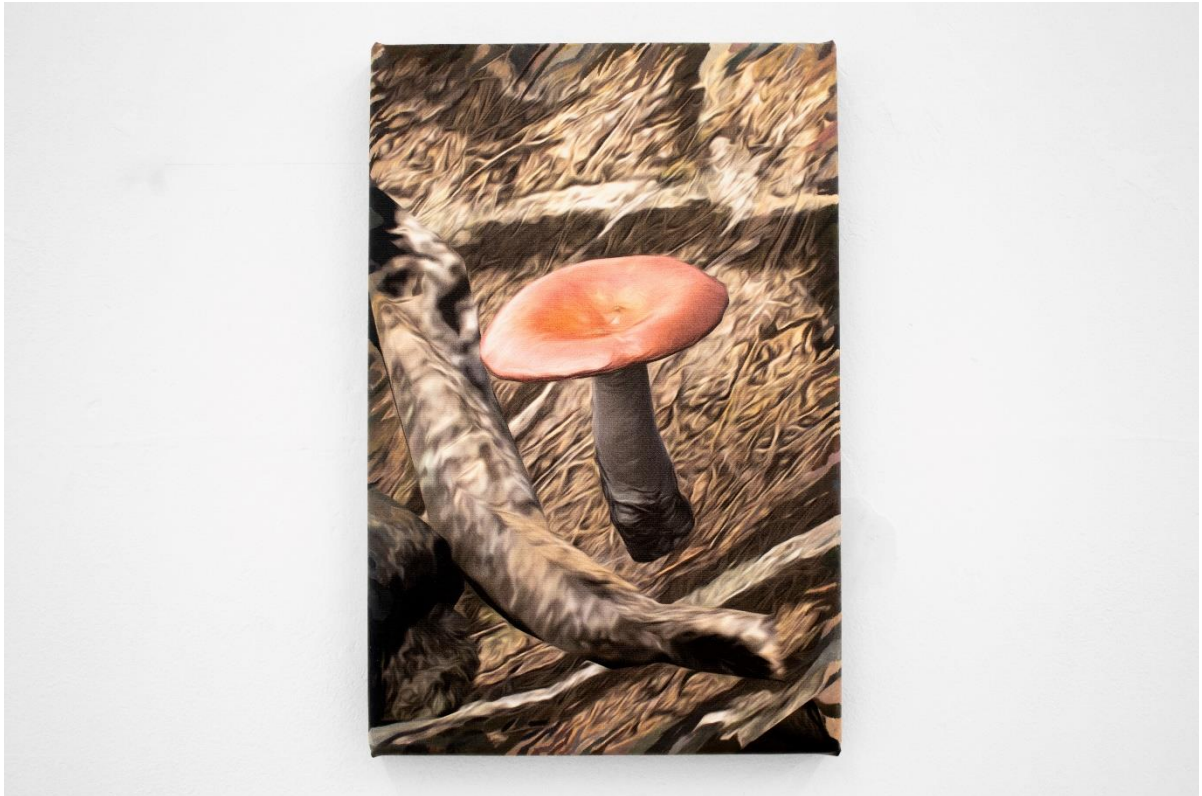
Bob Bicknell-Knight
EXPIRE, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
65 x 80 x 2 cm



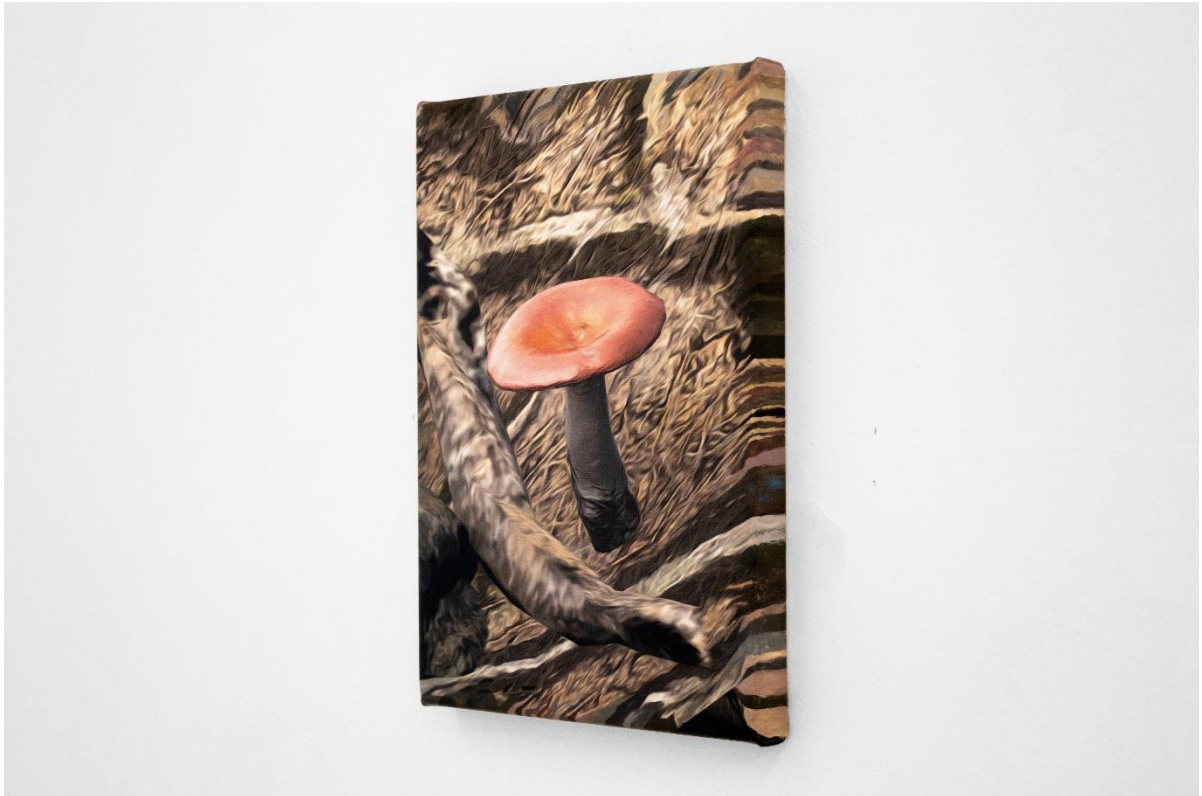
Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



Bob Bicknell-Knight
Prefab_mushroom_sickener_02, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
30 x 20 x 2 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
Prefab_mushroom_sickener_02, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
30 x 20 x 2 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
Prefab_mushroom_sickener_02, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
30 x 20 x 2 cm



Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



Bob Bicknell-Knight
ANNIHILATION (Grid), 2024
PLA, MDF, acrylic paint, varnish, glue, screws
36.2 x 49.2 x 9.6 cm



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PLA, MDF, acrylic paint, varnish, glue, screws
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PLA, MDF, acrylic paint, varnish, glue, screws
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Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



Bob Bicknell-Knight
PERIL, 2024
3D printed PLA, glue, screws
Dimensions variable



Bob Bicknell-Knight
PERIL, 2024
3D printed PLA, glue, screws
Dimensions variable



Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



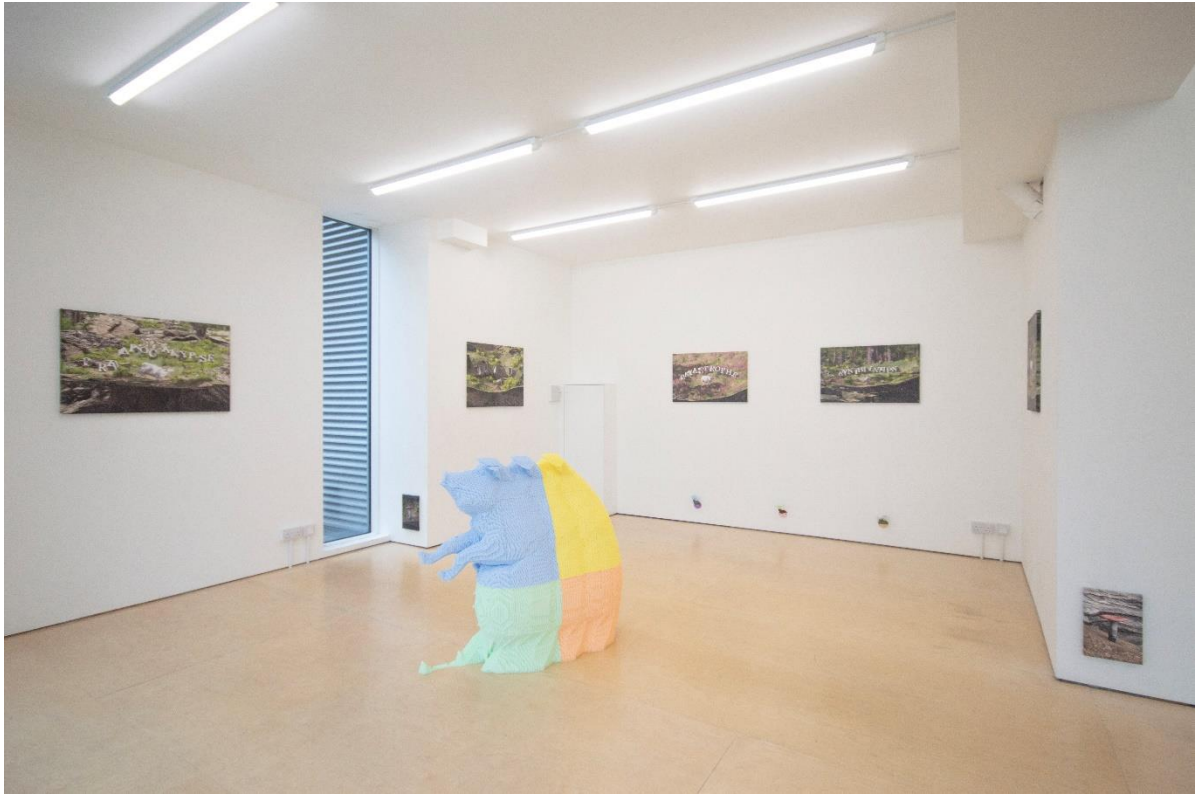
Bob Bicknell-Knight
Prefab_mushroom_sickener_01, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
30 x 20 x 2 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
Prefab_mushroom_sickener_01, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
30 x 20 x 2 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
Prefab_mushroom_sickener_01, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
30 x 20 x 2 cm



Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



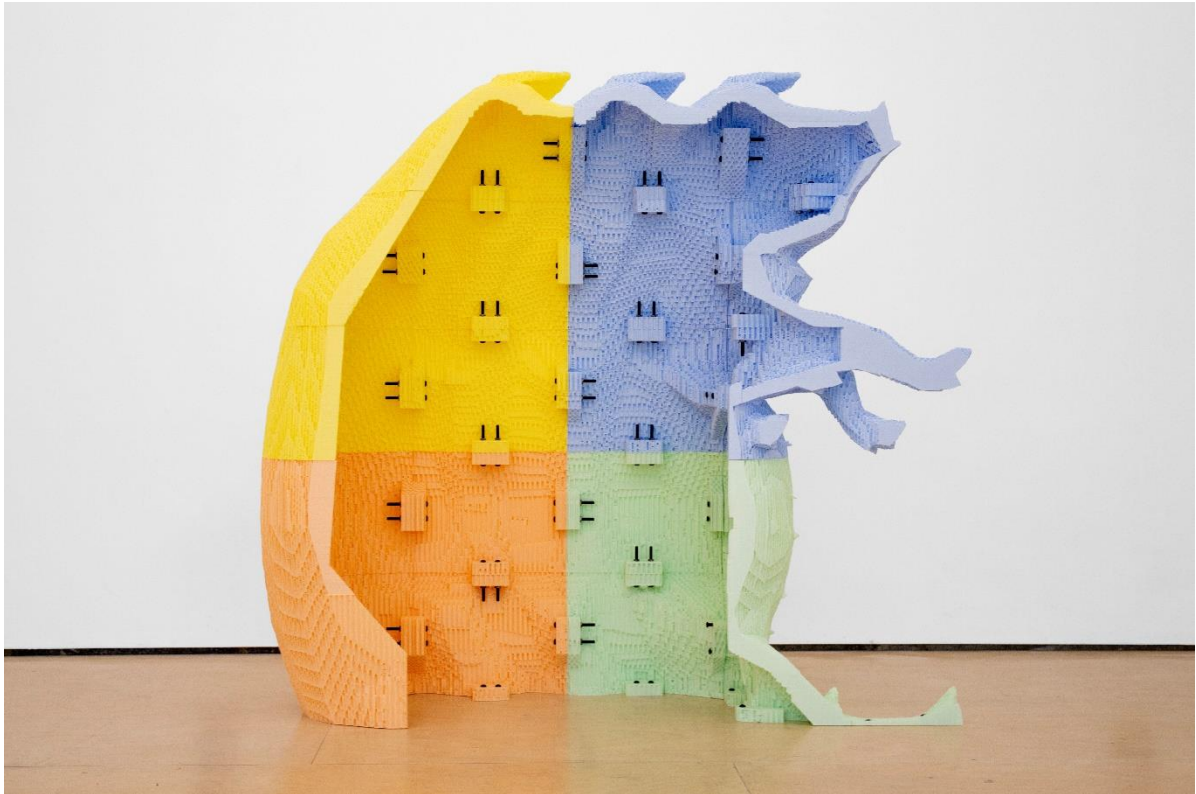
Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



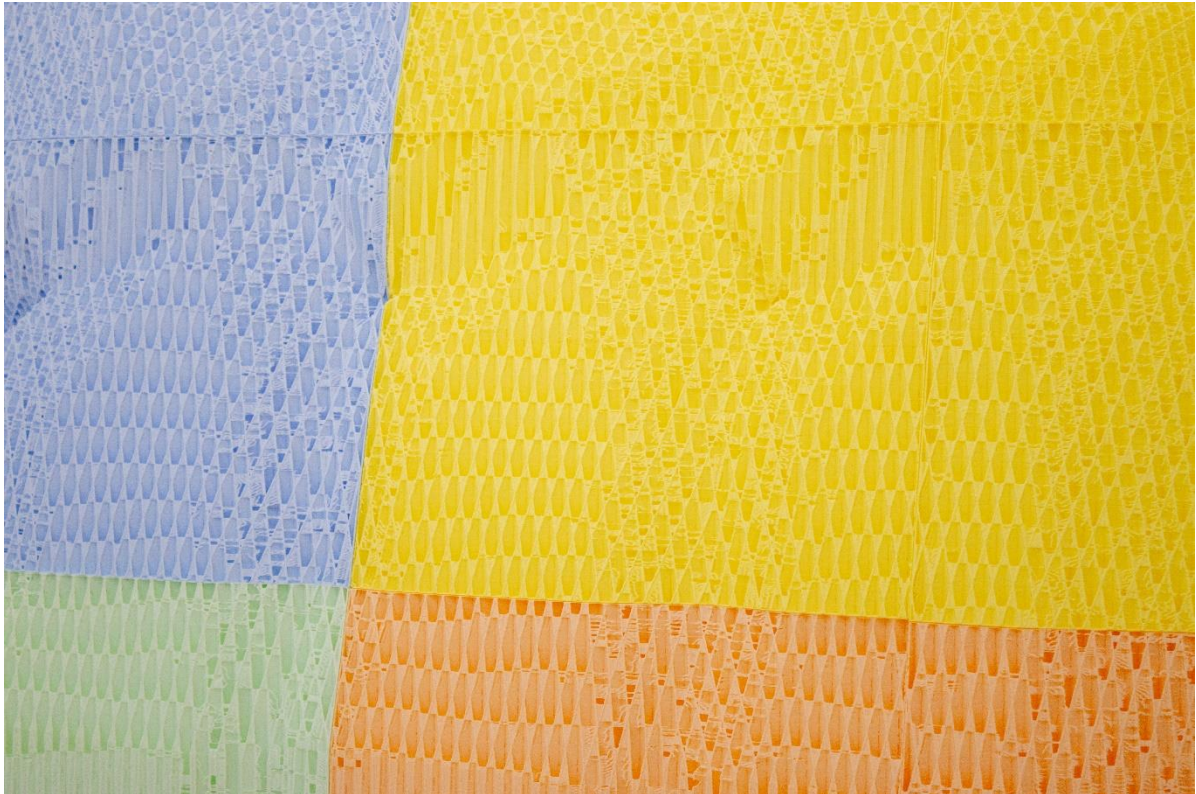
Bob Bicknell-Knight
Swine (Standing), 2024
PLA, epoxy, glue, screws
100.9 x 110.4 x 33.5 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
Swine (Standing), 2024
PLA, epoxy, glue, screws
100.9 x 110.4 x 33.5 cm



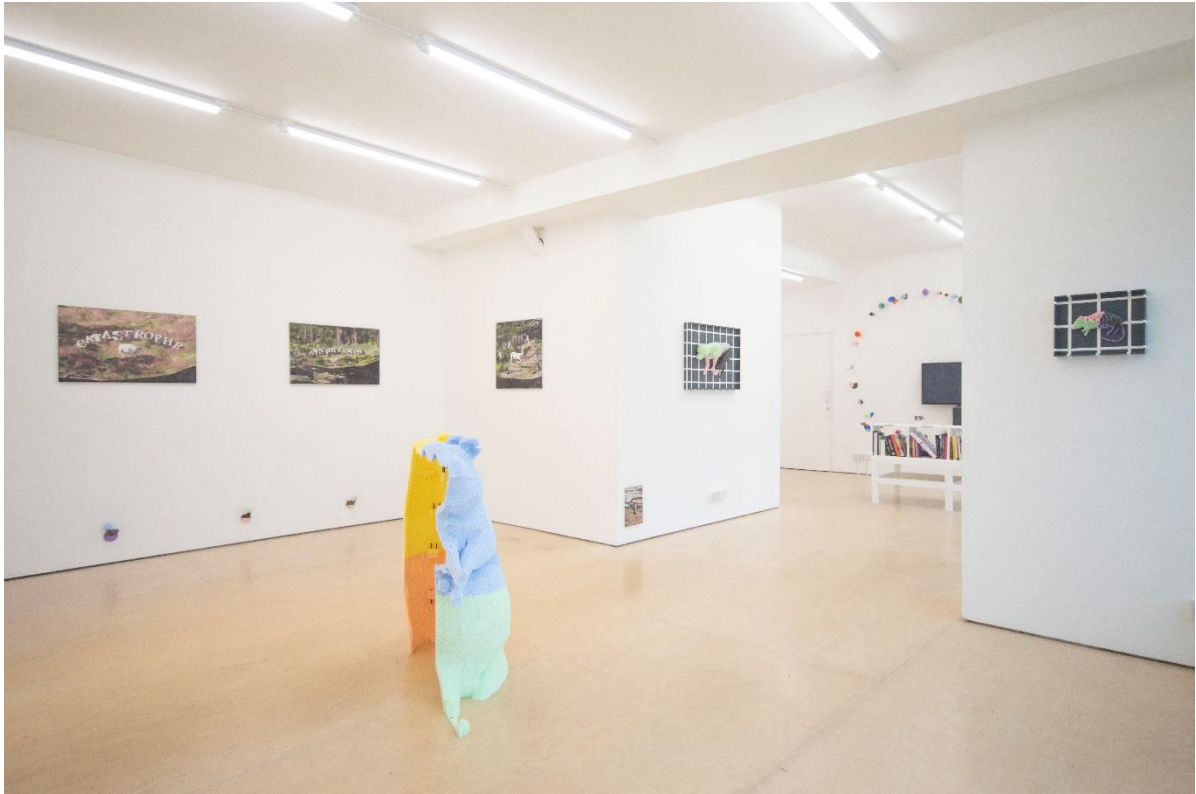
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Installation View



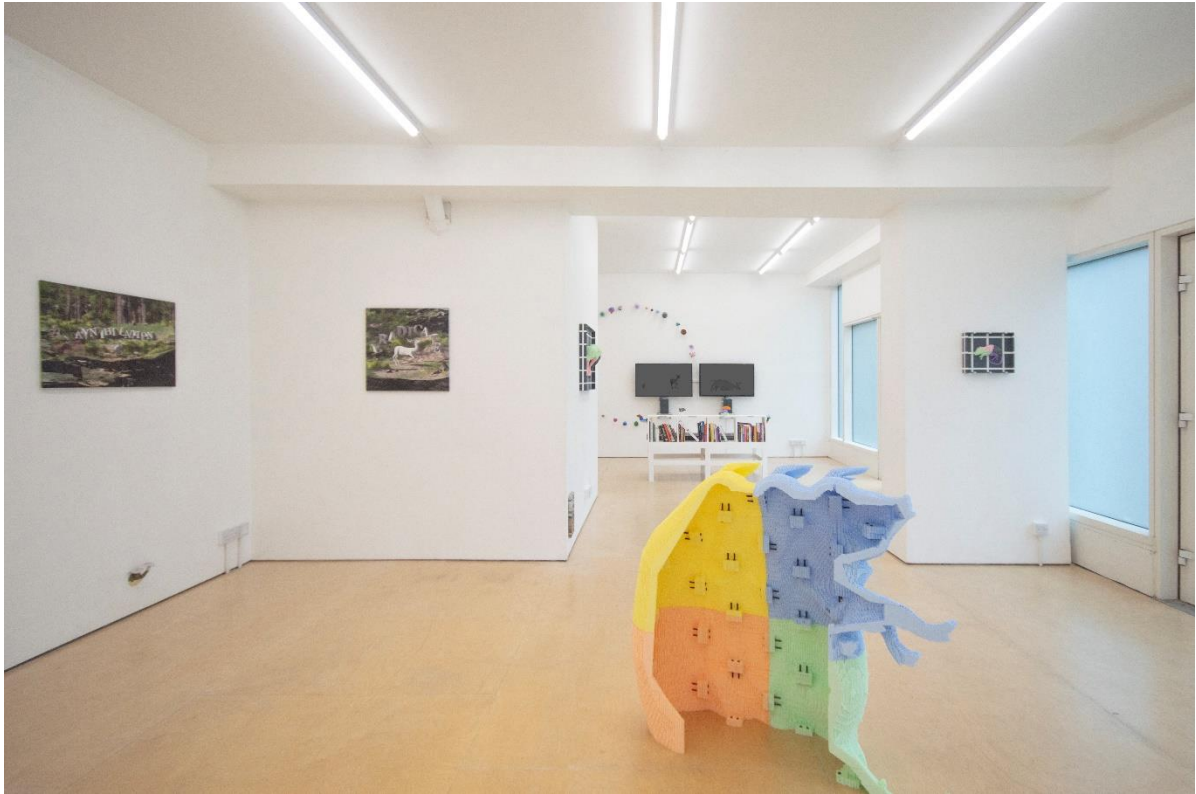
Bob Bicknell-Knight
DOOM (Grid), 2024
PLA, MDF, acrylic paint, varnish, glue, screws
28 x 33 x 7.5 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
DOOM (Grid), 2024
PLA, MDF, acrylic paint, varnish, glue, screws
28 x 33 x 7.5 cm



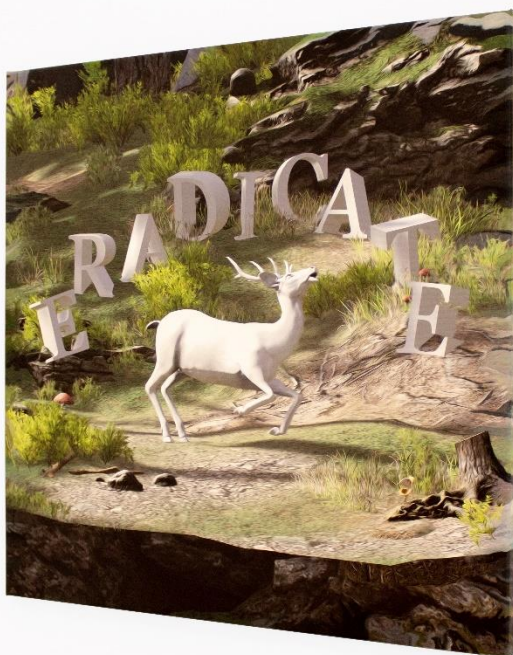
Bob Bicknell-Knight
DOOM (Grid), 2024
PLA, MDF, acrylic paint, varnish, glue, screws
28 x 33 x 7.5 cm



Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



Bob Bicknell-Knight
ERADICATE, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
60 x 60 x 2 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
ERADICATE, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
60 x 60 x 2 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
ERADICATE, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
60 x 60 x 2 cm



Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



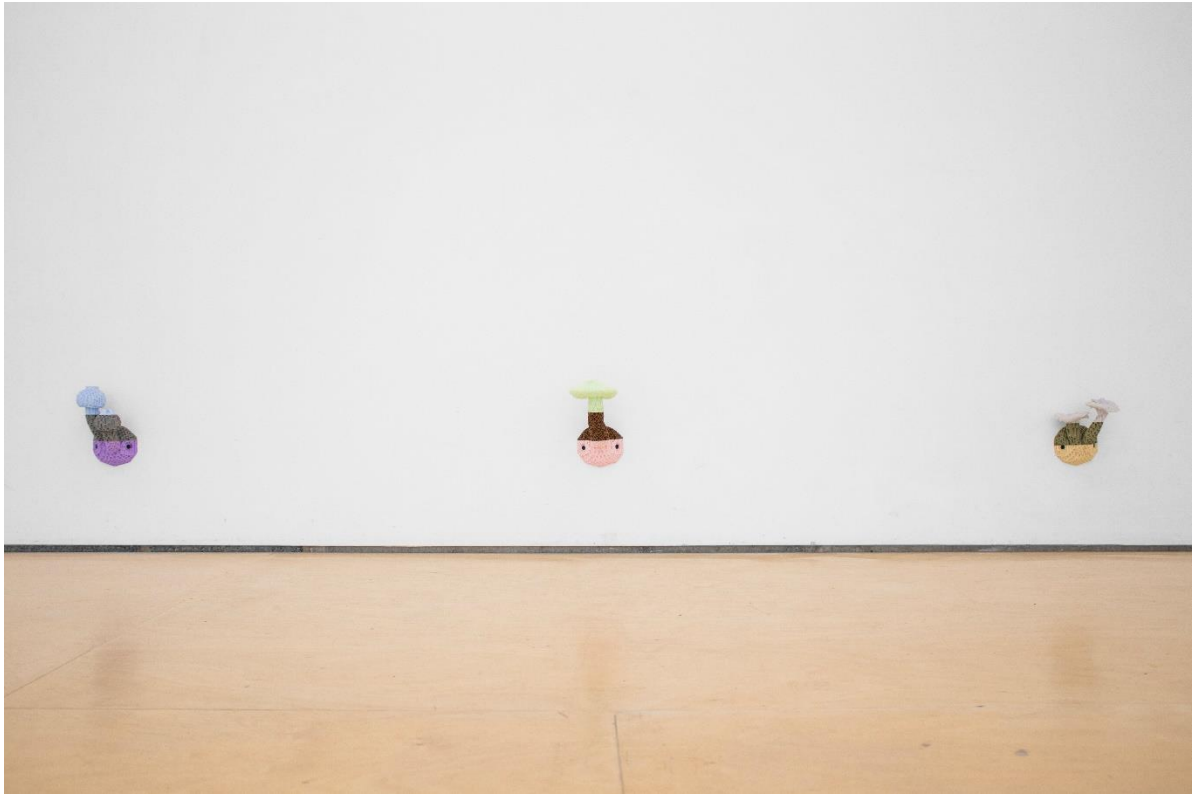
Bob Bicknell-Knight
ANNIHILATION, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
50 x 80 x 2 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
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Ink and acrylic on canvas
50 x 80 x 2 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
ANNIHILATION, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
50 x 80 x 2 cm



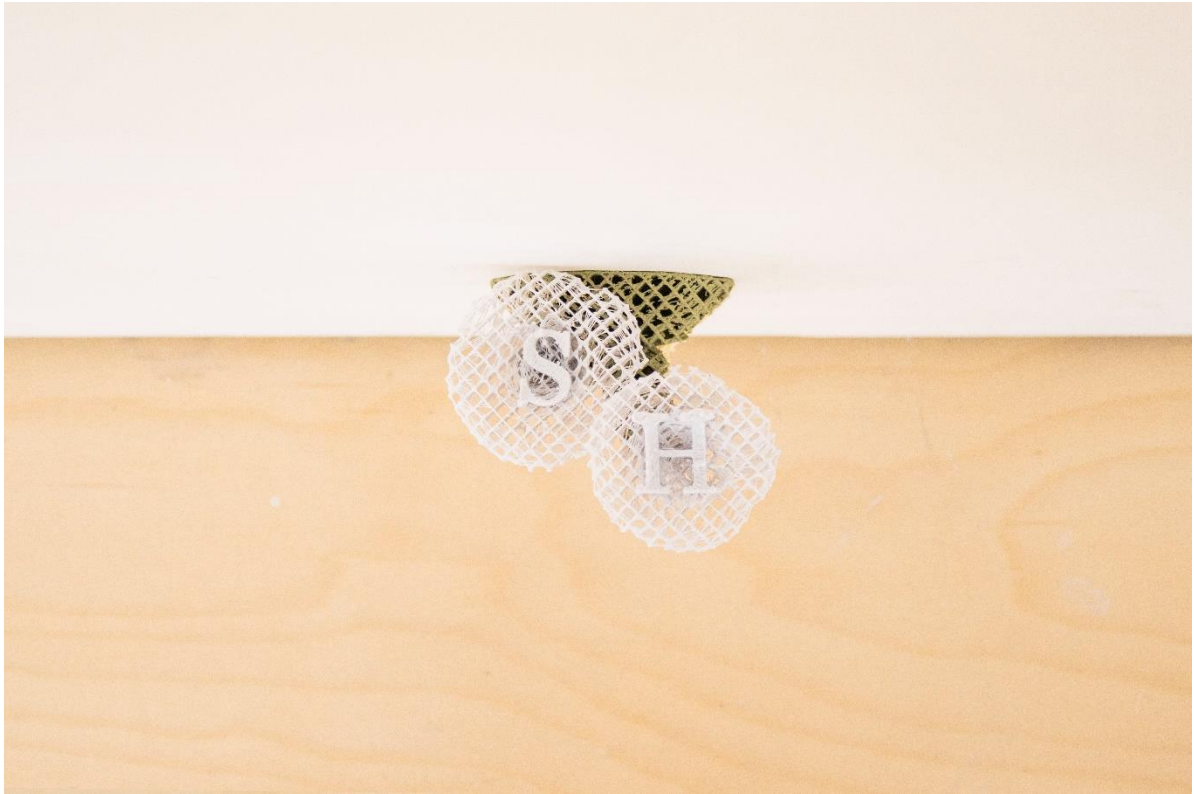
Bob Bicknell-Knight
CRASH, 2024
PLA, glue, screws
Dimensions variable



Bob Bicknell-Knight
CRASH, 2024
PLA, glue, screws
Dimensions variable



Bob Bicknell-Knight
CRASH, 2024
PLA, glue, screws
Dimensions variable



Bob Bicknell-Knight
CRASH, 2024
PLA, glue, screws
Dimensions variable



Bob Bicknell-Knight
ANNIHILATION, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
50 x 80 x 2 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
ANNIHILATION, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
50 x 80 x 2 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
ANNIHILATION, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
50 x 80 x 2 cm



Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



Bob Bicknell-Knight
DREAD, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
60 x 80 x 2 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
DREAD, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
60 x 80 x 2 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
DREAD, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
60 x 80 x 2 cm



Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



Bob Bicknell-Knight
Prefab_mushroom_sickener_03, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
30 x 20 x 2 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
Prefab_mushroom_sickener_03, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
30 x 20 x 2 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
Prefab_mushroom_sickener_03, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
30 x 20 x 2 cm



Asset Flip, 2024
Installation View



Bob Bicknell-Knight
PRE-APOCALYPSE, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
60 x 90 x 2 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
PRE-APOCALYPSE, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
60 x 90 x 2 cm



Bob Bicknell-Knight
PRE-APOCALYPSE, 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
60 x 90 x 2 cm