



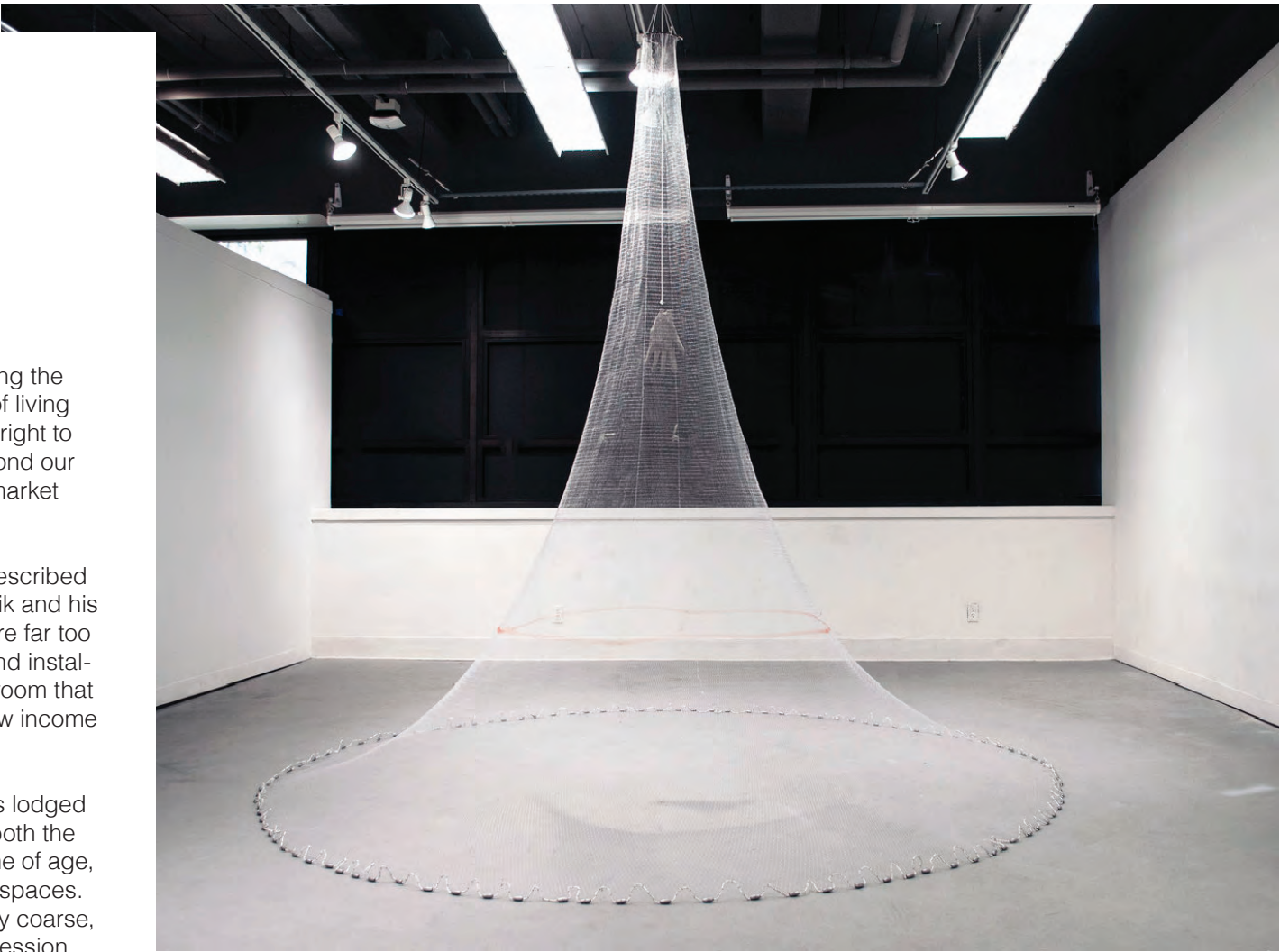
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In the aftermath of the Covid 19 pandemic, we may understand how far we are from ensuring the basic tenets detailed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, including food, clothing, housing and medical care; the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, old age, or other other circumstances beyond our control. We may acknowledge, finally, that human rights cannot flourish under the boot of market capitalism. Time will tell.

Calum Craik's expansive creative practice - exemplified by two exceptional pieces briefly described here - addresses neoliberalism's immediate personal and collective effect. A UK native, Craik and his family live the push/pull of market forces and the drive for a humane standard of living, where far too often the latter is sacrificed in service of both "growth" and "progress." Minimalist objects and installations including *Enclosed (Bedroom Tax)* - a section of carpeting from his adolescent bedroom that resembles an enigmatic abstract painting at first glance, but symbolizes a punitive tax on low income Britons - read as cold experiential evidence of how dehumanizing capitalism can be.

*Fields divided by Hawthorn* comprises short stacked concrete slabs with found photographs lodged in the interstitial cracks. Concrete is a common construction material that here represents both the below rental market public housing (council estates) where Craik and millions of Britons came of age, and the commercial building interventions that divide residents from the surrounding open spaces. Photographs, a form associated with identity and individuality, are obscured and distorted by coarse, depersonalized amalgamated rock. The installation conveys notions of separation, dispossession, and a loss of commonality that informs deep human connection.

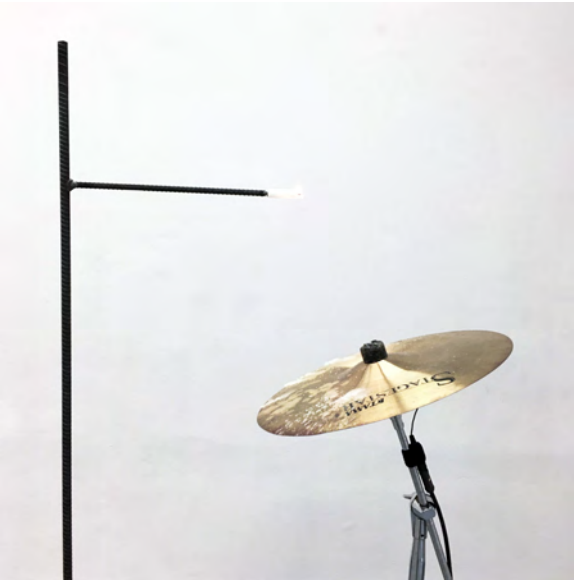
The unfortunate but necessary shift from a physical to a virtual exhibition in response to Covid 19 denies Craik and his cohort the opportunity to see years of hard work come to fruition. But, Craik's work lives in multiple formats that do not rely on formal exhibitions to reach audiences. Video, publications, and social practice projects that require collective labor to produce are all well established contemporary art strategies. In Craik's practice, the form after function factor belies his motivation to expose how normalized consumer consumption of art is, particularly within capitalist-oriented institutions such as museums and galleries.



(2)

# Calum Craik

calumcraik.com



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San Francisco State University  
School of Art  
2020 MFA Thesis Exhibition  
gallery.sfsu.edu

SFSU School of Art  
VIRTUAL 2020 MFA Thesis Exhibition  
18 June to 18 July, 2020  
<https://tinyurl.com/y734jope>

(1) *Invisible Hand/Dragnet*, 2019, Rubble from Adam Smith's house, chainmail glove, fishnet, 144" x 96", (2) detail of *InvisibleHand/Dragnet*, (3) *The Clock (cigarette break)*, 2020, Performance sculpture, rebar, candle, cymbal, concrete, amplifier, dimensions variable, (4) *Salesforce (carry that weight)*, 2020, backpack, concrete, 24"x 18", (5) *Double Uniqlo*, 2019, 2 x Uniqlo down vests, 2 x usb cords, resin, 40" x 24" x 12", (6) *Fields divided by Hawthorn*, 2019, concrete, found photographs, 48" x 36" x 3", (7) *Landlord*, (Still image), Video, 2020, 6 mins 53 secs, (8) *Fields divided by drystone walls*, 2019, Memory foam, found defensive landscaping rocks, and rocks from private building development sites, 80" x 40" x 6" (Back image) *VVValley (II)*, 2019, Expanded steel, silicon, 96" x 48" x 36" x 2.



