



University of  
**Southern**  
**Queensland**

# *Reprieve*

Original Artwork

Artist: Rhiannan Johnson

**[Original Work Submission Year: 2024]**

***Relieve*** is an acrylic painting on board which reflects on the artist's experiences of anxiety, depression, and PTSD. It was selected to be exhibited as part of the 'Recovered Futures 2024' exhibition, which was shown online and in King George Square, Brisbane in October 2024.

**Original Artwork – Visual Arts**

**Rhi Johnson (UniSQ)**

**[Original Artwork Submission – 2024]**

## RESEARCH STATEMENT – *Reprieve* [Original Artwork]

**Background:** The research question is 'how can lived experiences of mental illness be interrogated through the visual exploration of everyday environments?' This inquiry is situated within an interdisciplinary theoretical framework of contemporary art theory designating mental illness as theme (Bennett, 2005; Best, 2011) and medical humanities which situates art as a means of conveying illness outside of clinical parameters (Charon, 2008; Carel, 2018). In this context, postmodern and contemporary artists including Ban Jan Ader and Tracey Emin have highlighted such societal taboos through their work. This research draws on these traditions and situates them in a regional context, deploying communicative platforms and dialogues surrounding illness and recovery in an accessible way, where creative practitioners of diverse backgrounds and training engage in visual storytelling.

**Contribution:** 'Reprieve' is an acrylic painting on board which reflects on the artist's lived experiences of anxiety, depression, and PTSD. This work contributes to the field through authentic voice from a regional Australian context, drawing parallels between place and emotional state, even when there is a perceived visual disconnect. The work reveals layered experience, multiple meanings, and concealed struggles with mental illness. This work responds to the research question on an intimate physical scale, whereby the environment depicted draws viewers in close and conveys a scene that is simultaneously banal and foreboding.

**Significance:** 'Reprieve' was selected to be exhibited in 'Recovered Futures 2024', which was presented by Richmond Fellowship Queensland and curated by Nicola Holly. This is a prominent initiative for psychosocial dialogue and recovery and is open to artists with lived experiences of mental illness. Works by 270 artists were exhibited in King George Square, Brisbane from 4-10 October. There was a significant communal reach, with over 10,000 in person viewers and over 16,000 online.

### References:

- Bennett, J., 2005. *Empathic vision: Affect, trauma, and contemporary art*. Stanford University Press.
- Best, S., 2011. Visualizing feeling.
- Carel, H., 2018. *Illness: The cry of the flesh*. Routledge.
- Charon, R., 2008. *Narrative medicine: Honoring the stories of illness*. Oxford University Press.



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***Reprieve*** 2024

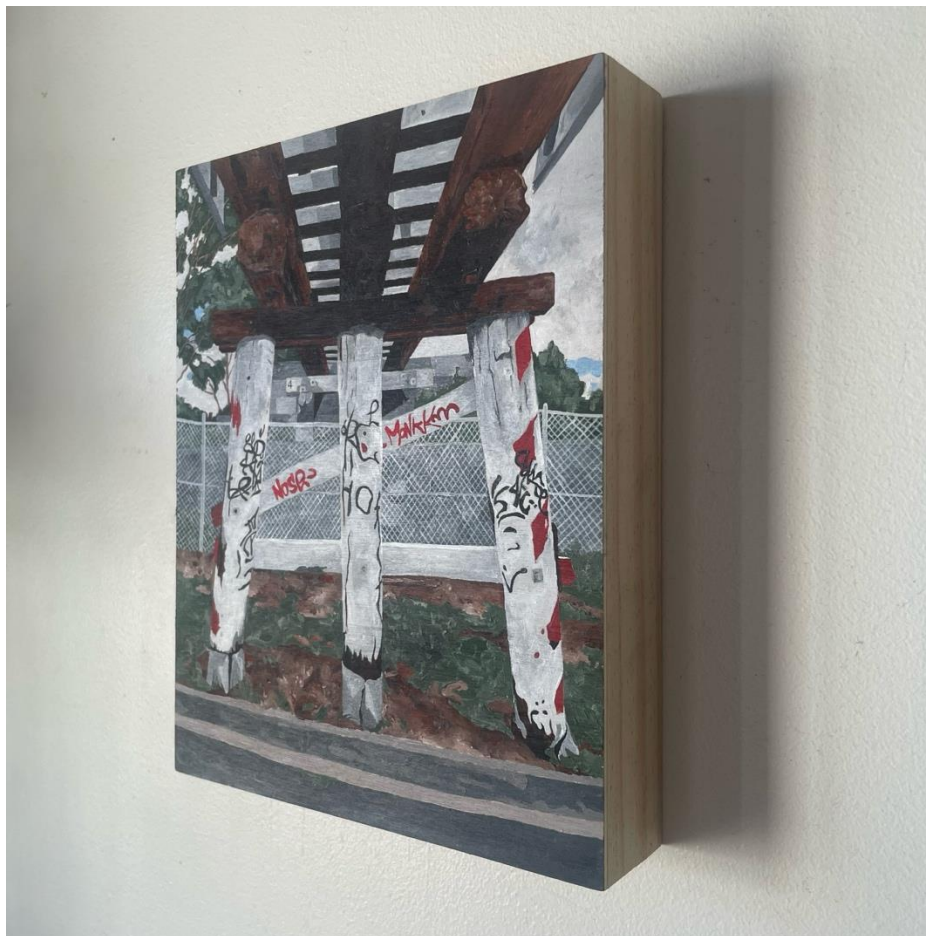
Rhiannan Johnson

Acrylic paint  
on board





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***Reprieve (detail)*** 2024

Rhiannan Johnson

Acrylic paint  
on board