

## PRESS RELEASE

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### ALISON WILDING

16 February – 12 August 2018

Preview 15 February 2018

The Whitworth presents an exhibition of works spanning the past 20 years of the career of Turner Prize nominee and Royal Academician Alison Wilding. The exhibition will comprise of three large sculptures shown alongside a more recent work, *Reversing*, 2017, a hand-printed wallpaper that reworks William Morris' Acanthus motif asymmetrically. A further selection of small sculptures will also be included; their hand-held size counteracting the scale of the large works.

Wilding's use of different materials is reminiscent of a game of stone, paper, scissors. Each medium connects with the other: paper floats on concrete, brass pins paper, and wood embraces acrylic. Also, like the game, the hierarchy of materials is not straightforward. In *Largo*, 2002, the delicacy of a silk or paper flower is as significant as the heft of a concrete half-sphere. For *Reversing*, 2017, the expanse of ghostly paper, printed with William Morris's acanthus design, is exactly fixed by a small, sharp edged brass object: history caught and nailed to the wall like a specimen butterfly. Together the sculptures speak to each other of weight and lightness - as the dense material of one component plays against the impermanence of the other.

The works also imply narrative in their internal relations of sculptural elements and further hint at stories in their titles. *Disposition*, 1998, a precarious concrete circular disk fronted by a carpet of rubber protuberances could surely be rolled away? *In a Dark Wood*, 2012 is a literal proposition, where the stained and laminated Iroko wood holds about 15 grey spheres. The title is taken from the opening lines of Dante's *Inferno*, 'In the middle of the road of our life/I found myself once more in a dark wood/Where the straight way was lost.' As in much of Wilding's work, both these sculptures feature enclosure and containment, and all the works offer the possibility of something beyond surface, an interior contained within, an imprint left behind.

**Alison Wilding** studied at Nottingham College of Art from 1967 to 1968, Ravensbourne College of Art and Design, Bromley, Kent from 1968 to 1971 and subsequently at the Royal College of Art, London from 1971 to 1973. She was nominated for the Turner Prize in 1992 and received a Henry Moore Fellowship for The British School at Rome in 1998.

#### About the Whitworth

The Whitworth is part of The University of Manchester. It is home to internationally renowned collections of modern art, textiles, watercolours, prints, drawings and sculpture. Created in 1889 as the first English gallery in a park, the Whitworth has developed a new vision for the role of a university gallery. A creative laboratory within an ambitious university, the Whitworth is a place where good, unusual things happen. The Whitworth re-opened to the public on 14 February 2015 after a major £17 million redevelopment by architects MUMA. The Whitworth has welcomed over one million visitors since re-opening, and more than doubled its previous annual records. The redevelopment has doubled public space and created state-of-the-art new facilities including expanded gallery spaces, a study centre, learning studio, and a collections centre. The gallery was crowned Art Fund Museum of Year 2015, nominated for the prestigious Stirling Prize and named Best Emerging Cultural Destination in Europe. [www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth)

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