WIND FARM: REIMAGINING RAMPION II

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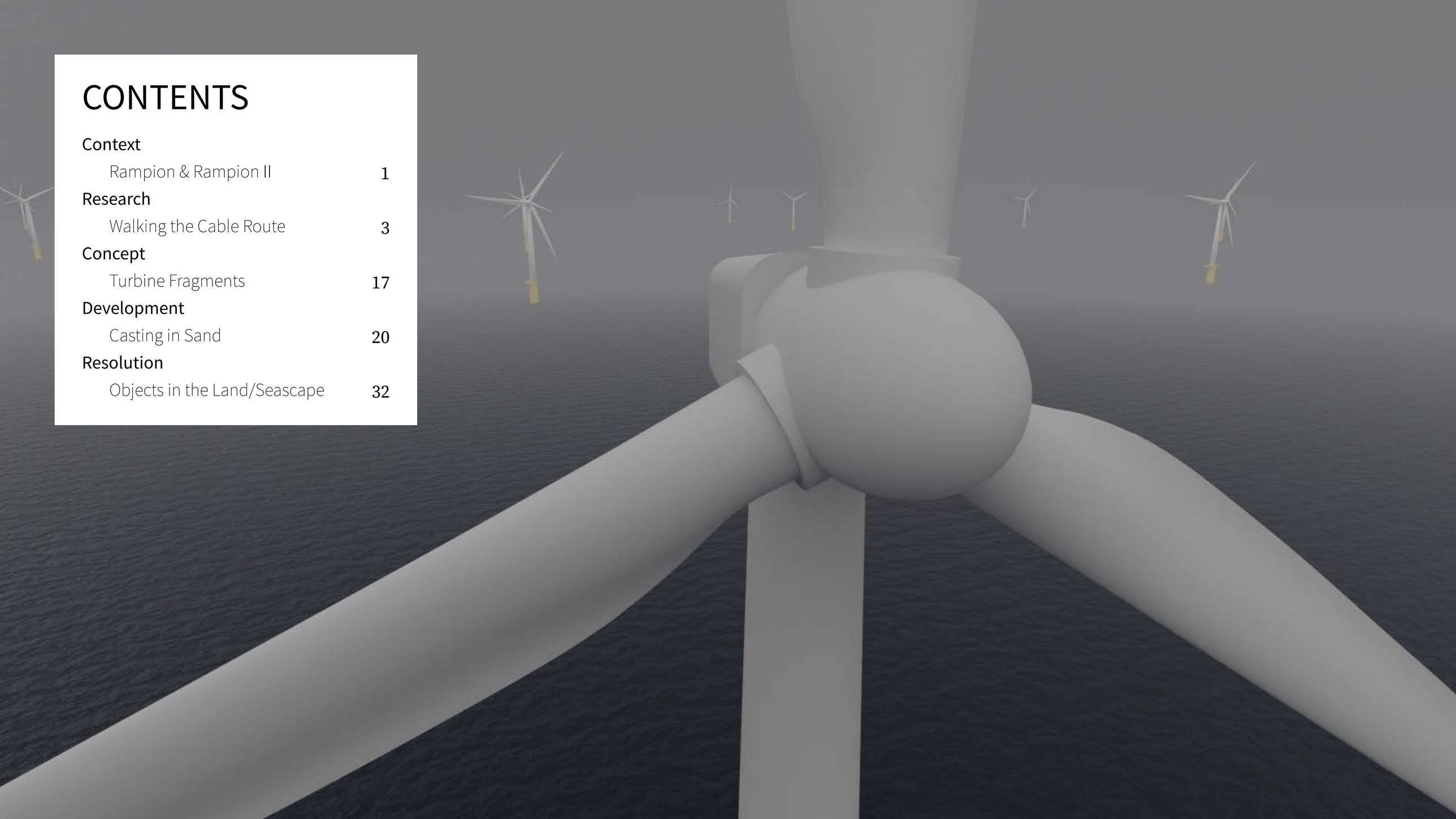


COVER IMAGE
Turbine blade flotsam, modelled and rendered using Blender 3.0

PREVIOUS
Wind turbine array, 3D render

CONTEXT: RAMPION & RAMPION II

I began researching the Rampion offshore wind farm and the proposed Rampion II expansion in autumn 2021, led by an interest in large infrastructure projects and their interactions with landscapes. My aim was to explore new ways of interpreting a conspicuous local landmark, beyond familiar debates concerning the visual impact and suitability of new turbines.

Visible from Brighton seafront, Rampion is the south coast's first offshore wind farm, and if approved by planners, Rampion II will increase its capacity by up to

View of the Rampion wind farm from the shore (courtesy of Rampion Offshore Wind)

Workers inspecting the Rampion onshore cable trench

RIGHT
The grave of an 11th-century Anglo-Saxon man discovered during the first Rampion onshore archaeological programme

(Both courtesy of Rampion Offshore Wind)

1200MW—enough to supply over a million homes. This would see up to 116 new wind turbines installed off the Sussex coastline and require construction of a 36km onshore cable route to transport power to the grid.

The project's developers are expected to submit an application to the Planning Inspectorate by the third quarter of 2022, following public consultations held July–September 2021 and February–April 2022.

All being well, Rampion II will be operational by the end of the decade.

RESEARCH: WALKING THE CABLE ROUTE

Early on in my research, I became interested in the proposed onshore cable and the extensive environmental surveys undertaken as part of the pre-application process. These reveal the depth and complexity of factors—physical, biological, and human—that constitute a landscape, and the extent to which these determine key planning decisions.

Prompted by these insights, I attempted to walk the length of the proposed cable route, to see for myself the otherwise peripheral places it traverses and connects. During these walks, I took photographs which later informed experimental 3D models, a selection of which are included below.

Map showing the Rampion II onshore cable corridor assessment area (red) and my attempt to follow it (blue)

OVERLEAF
View of Rampion offshore wind farm from Climping Beach, west of Littlehampton
26/10/2021

Clay pipes/concrete/cable ties, 3D render

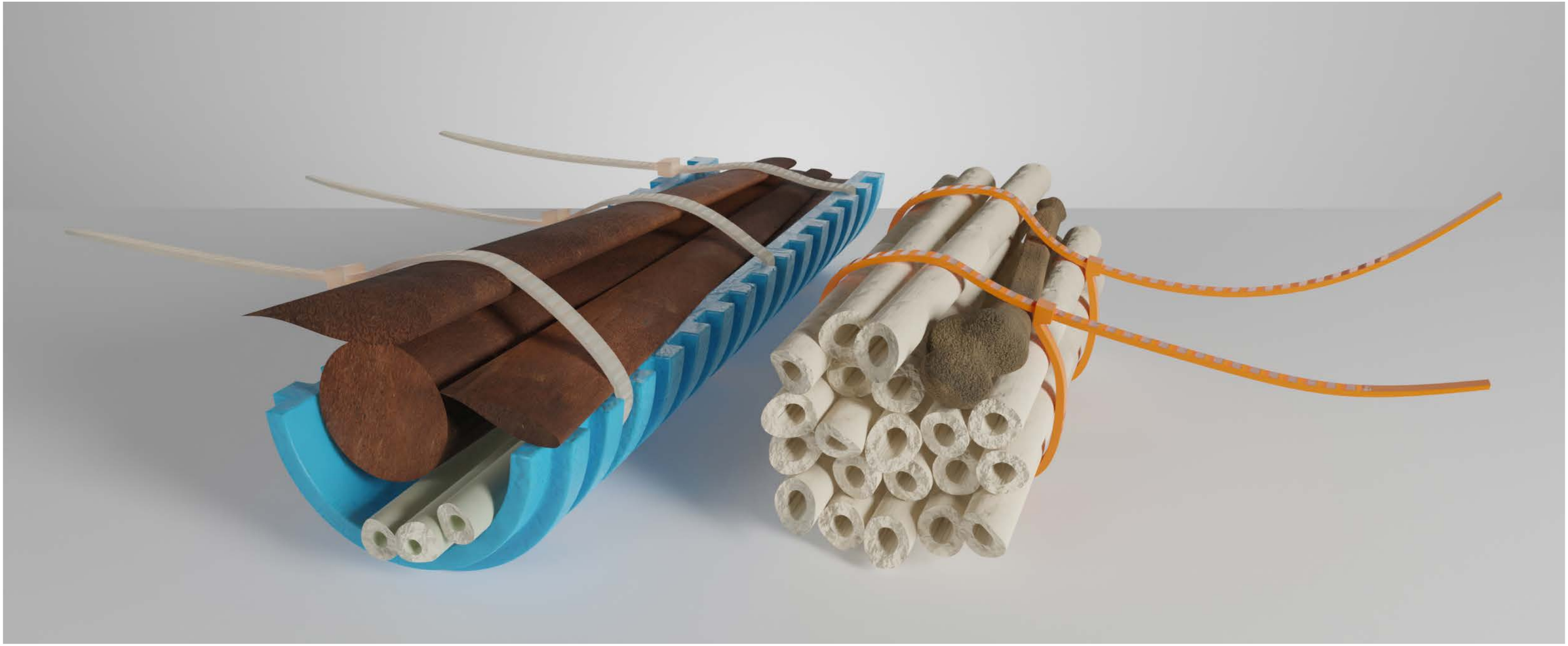
Aggregate, Climping Beach
30/11/2021

OVERLEAF
View of Littlehampton's gasholder from Ferry Road
26/10/2021

Plastic tube/concrete, 3D render

TOP
Corn stubble, north of Lyminster caravan park
30/11/2021

BOTTOM
Muddy crater, east of Climping caravan park
26/10/2021



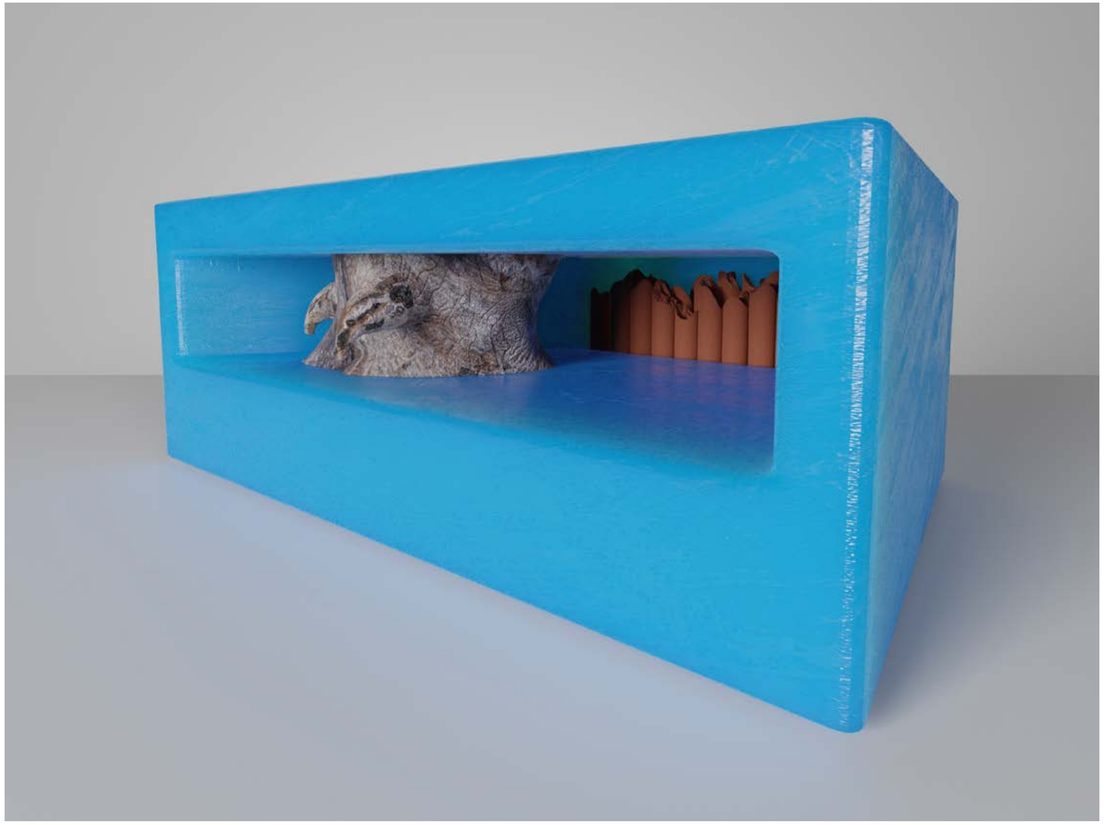
Plastic tube/clay pipes/cable ties/rusted blade sections/bone, 3D render

These models, made using Blender, reference forms and materials from along the cable route, presented as assemblages of digital “found” objects. They respond to the uncanny echoes and resemblances I encountered throughout the landscape—the ambiguity of things that defies and undermines homogeneous representation.

OVERLEAF
The Isles Copse
26/10/2021

Coven of umbrellas, The Fountain Inn, Ashurst
09/11/2021

RIGHT
Garstons Farm
14/12/2021



Plastic tub/clay pipes/log, 3D render

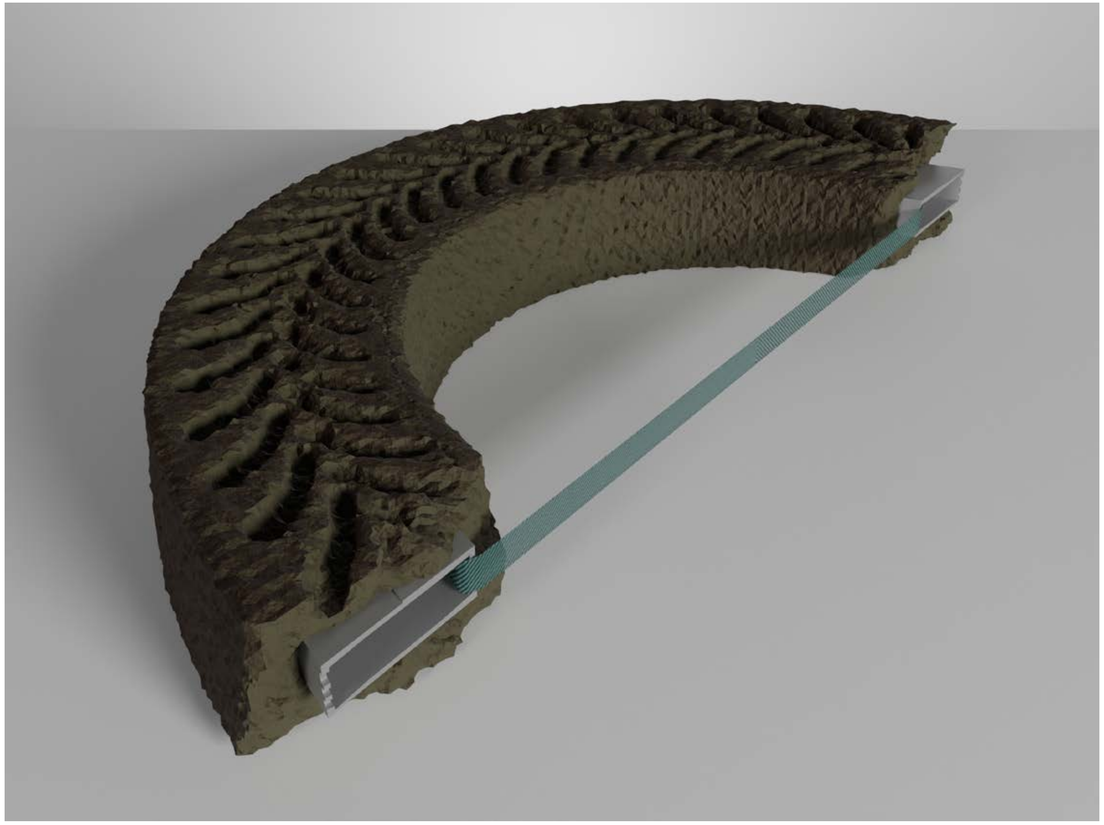
TOP
Field gun emplacement, east of Bines Green
09/11/2021

BOTTOM
Trough, Staplefields
09/11/2021

PREVIOUS
Warningcamp Hill
01/11/2021

Caravan, Beggars Bush Kennels
09/11/2021

RIGHT
Horsham Road
09/11/2021



Metal ducting/earth/electric fencing polytape, 3D render

TOP
Tyre tracks, Buncton
01/11/2021

BOTTOM
All Saints Church, Buncton
01/11/2021

Barriers, Cowfold
14/12/2021

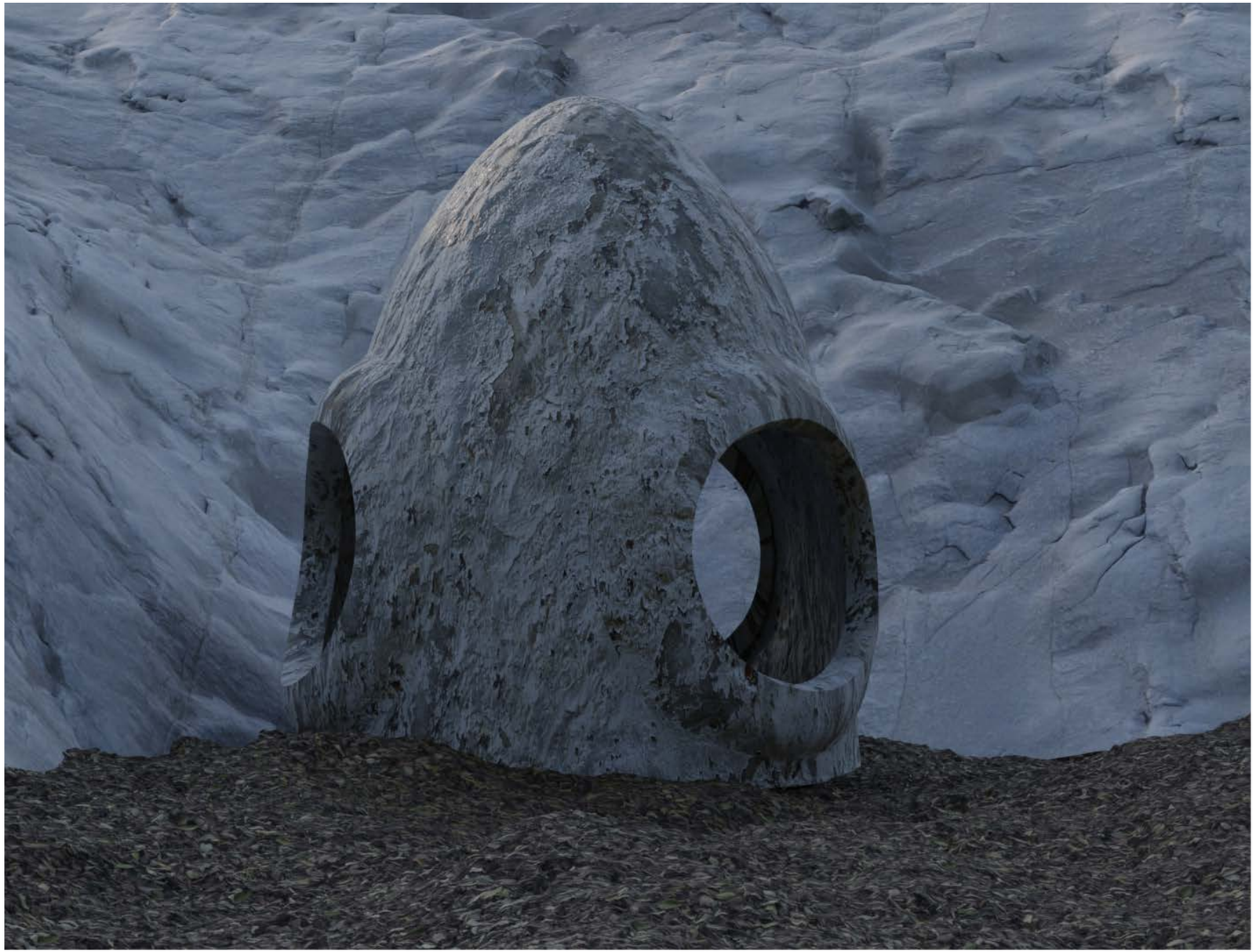
RIGHT
Plywood/polycarbonate panel/plastic tube/concrete, 3D render

PREVIOUS
Electrical substation, Bolney
14/12/2021

CONCEPT:
TURBINE FRAGMENTS

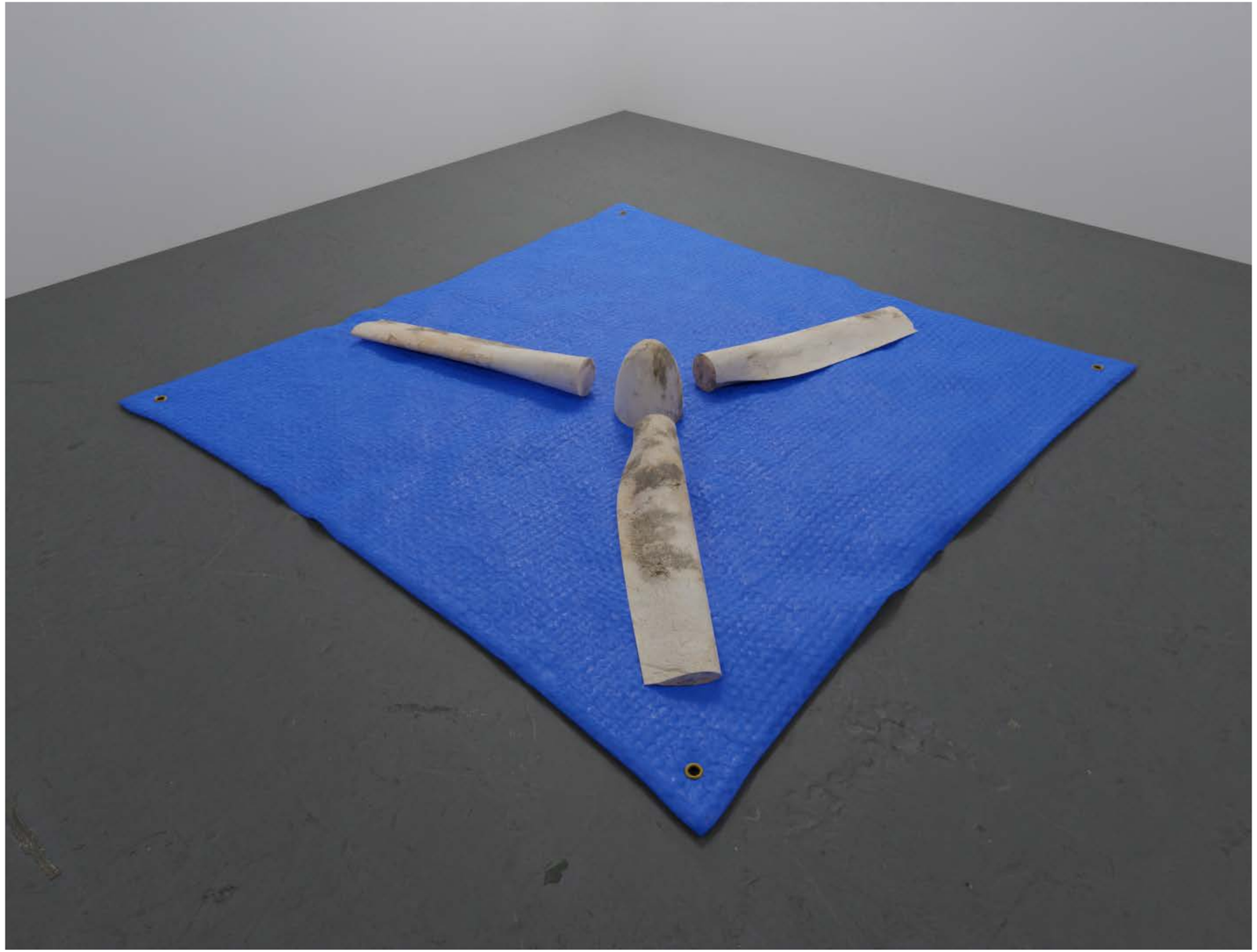
As my research progressed, I started to focus on the appearance of wind turbines and what this expresses—lightness, grace, dynamism, detachment etc. In the iconography of climate action, these qualities help to project a hopeful vision for a greener future. Like the turbines themselves, however, it remains perpetually on the horizon—always in view, but never in reach.

In the following images, the aforementioned qualities are inverted by time and neglect, reflecting the quiet dereliction of the cable landscape. They speak to a loss of faith in official narratives of progress, after decades of government and corporate inaction on climate breakdown.



Turbine nose cone, 3D render

Spent turbine blade sections, 3D render

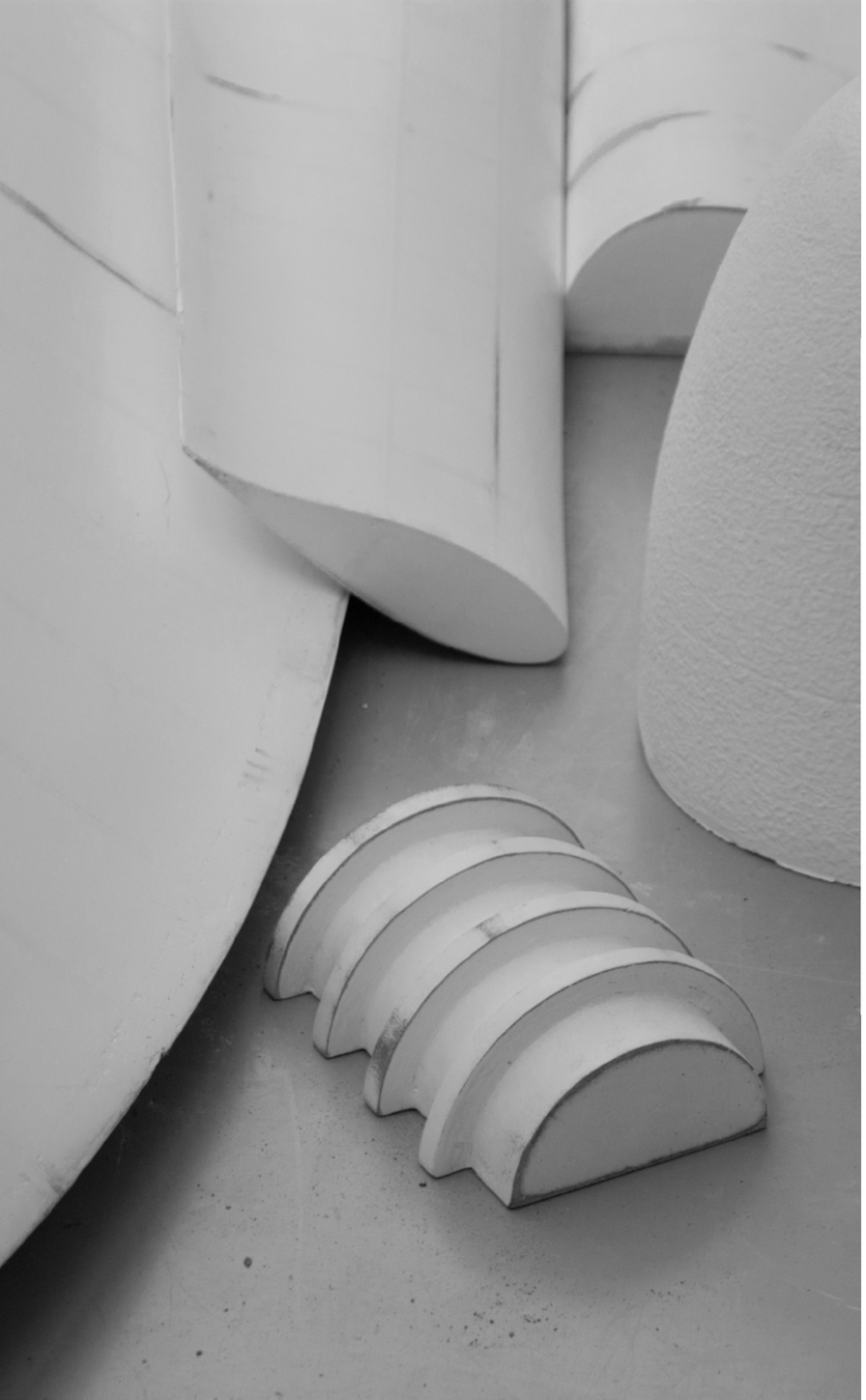


Envisioned project outcome—ceramic turbine fragments displayed like archaeological finds, 3D render

PREVIOUS
Washed-up turbine blade sections and nose cone, 3D render

DEVELOPMENT: CASTING IN SAND

Having settled on a concept, I considered several ways of producing the forms in ceramic, before arriving at sand casting. After some initial testing, this process enabled me to make multiple copies of a master model without using heavy and difficult-to-recycle plaster moulds. Moreover, it imparted texture and imperfections to the cast objects consistent with their presentation as stylized artefacts or remains. I sought to emphasise this further through glazes that replicate colours and textures photographed during the cable walks.

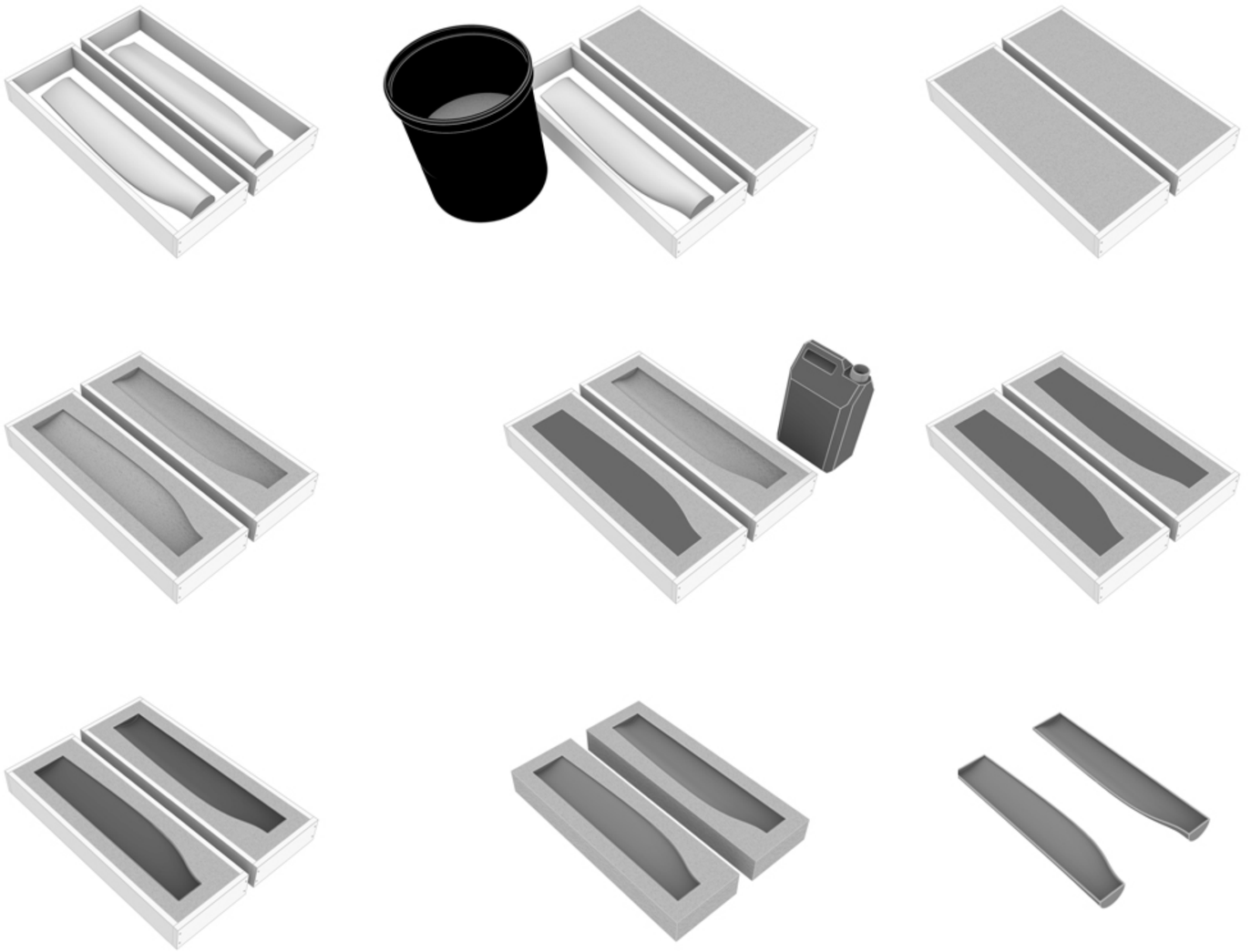


LEFT
Plywood and Polyfilla models

RIGHT
Sand-cast test pot—(left to right) unfired, bisque-fired, and with sand removed

LEFT
Cast ready to be “excavated” from sand mould

RIGHT
Unfired sand casts



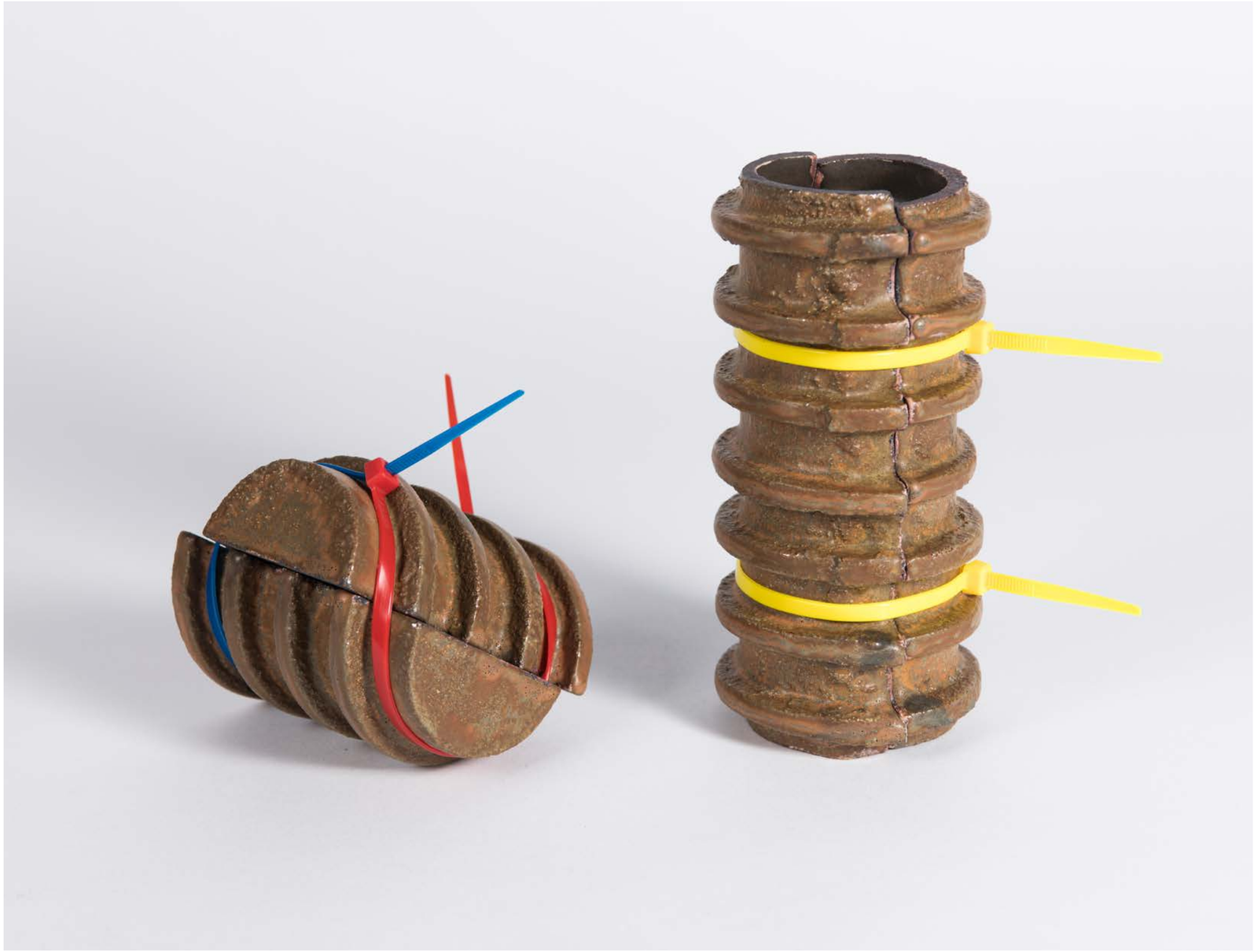
PREVIOUS LEFT

Scattering green sand (a mixture of sand and bentonite clay) over a master model to create a mould

PREVIOUS RIGHT

The sand-casting process—clay slip is poured into the mould leaving a hollow cast once the excess is removed (the two halves are finally joined with slip)

Sand-cast turbine blade sections drying before bisque firing



Sand casts No. 2 & 3 bound together with cable ties

This period of technical research and development culminates in a series of sand-cast ceramic sculptures. These represent an individual response to Rampion II and its wider context, both local and global. They are intended for display in a gallery, where I hope they will encourage viewers to consider the meanings ascribed to objects and images, and how these might obscure a far more complex, interesting, and troubling reality.

LEFT

Rust texture, Arun Valley

27/02/2022

RIGHT

Sand Cast No. 4, glaze detail

Sand casts No. 6, 4 & 5 (from left to right)

LEFT
Nose cone No. 2, glaze detail

RIGHT
Climping Beach
26/10/2021

Nose cones No. 2, 1 & 3 (from left to right)

LEFT
Garden wall, Brighton
20/03/2022

RIGHT
Turbine blade sections/ polystyrene

OVERLEAF
Turbine blades No. 1-6

RESOLUTION: OBJECTS IN THE LAND/SEASCAPE

It was always my intention to photograph finished objects in the places that inspired them. When deciding on a location for this shoot, Climping Beach stood out as the obvious choice. Not only is it a key site within the Rampion II proposal—the point at which the export cable makes landfall—it also captures many of the broader themes informing my work to date. The backdrop of ruined seawalls and tank defences makes for a fittingly sci-fi atmosphere, but moreover, the beach represents a poignant threshold; an ever-shifting boundary between land and sea, past and future, memory and forgetting. It is a mirror to the horizon on which Rampion's turbines are visible as ghosts.

All photographs taken on Climping Beach
13/05/2022