



Sarah McFadden

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Capstone – Metalsmithing

Department of Art and Art History

**Artist Statement:**

Working as a Metalsmith, I explore the complex ideas of memory, attachment, and entropy by creating physical objects. In my own life, I have struggled with letting go of people, places, memories, and beliefs. This is partially because there is no indisputable evidence that the events, relationships, and feelings I have experienced have actually transpired. Only traces of these things remain, and I only know that they are from these past things.

In *Nothing to Hold*, I have created a series of copper boxes. Boxes formally contain and hold. With material, size, and shape in mind, these boxes were created to be held themselves. Copper is an approachable material, soft and warm, encouraging touch. Small enough to fit in one's hand, curvature and texture bring awareness to the surface of the pieces. The traditional sense of a box is challenged in these pieces by the manipulation of common box forms. Starting with volumetric forms, each one is manipulated through different processes: raising, hammering, and electroforming. Marks from these processes are left on the surface of the objects, referencing their own memories and pasts. These manipulating processes lead to objects that are both familiar, yet unknown, inviting the viewer to visually digest their surfaces and forms, learning their histories.

In addition to collecting intangible things like memories and relationships, we have an inert tendency to collect physical objects. We keep them piled high in closets or tucked away in boxes in basements. Only rarely taking them out of their resting places to use them or to reminisce about how they came into our lives; mementos for where we've been. This compulsive collection of object is an attempt to control constant deterioration of stability in our lives.

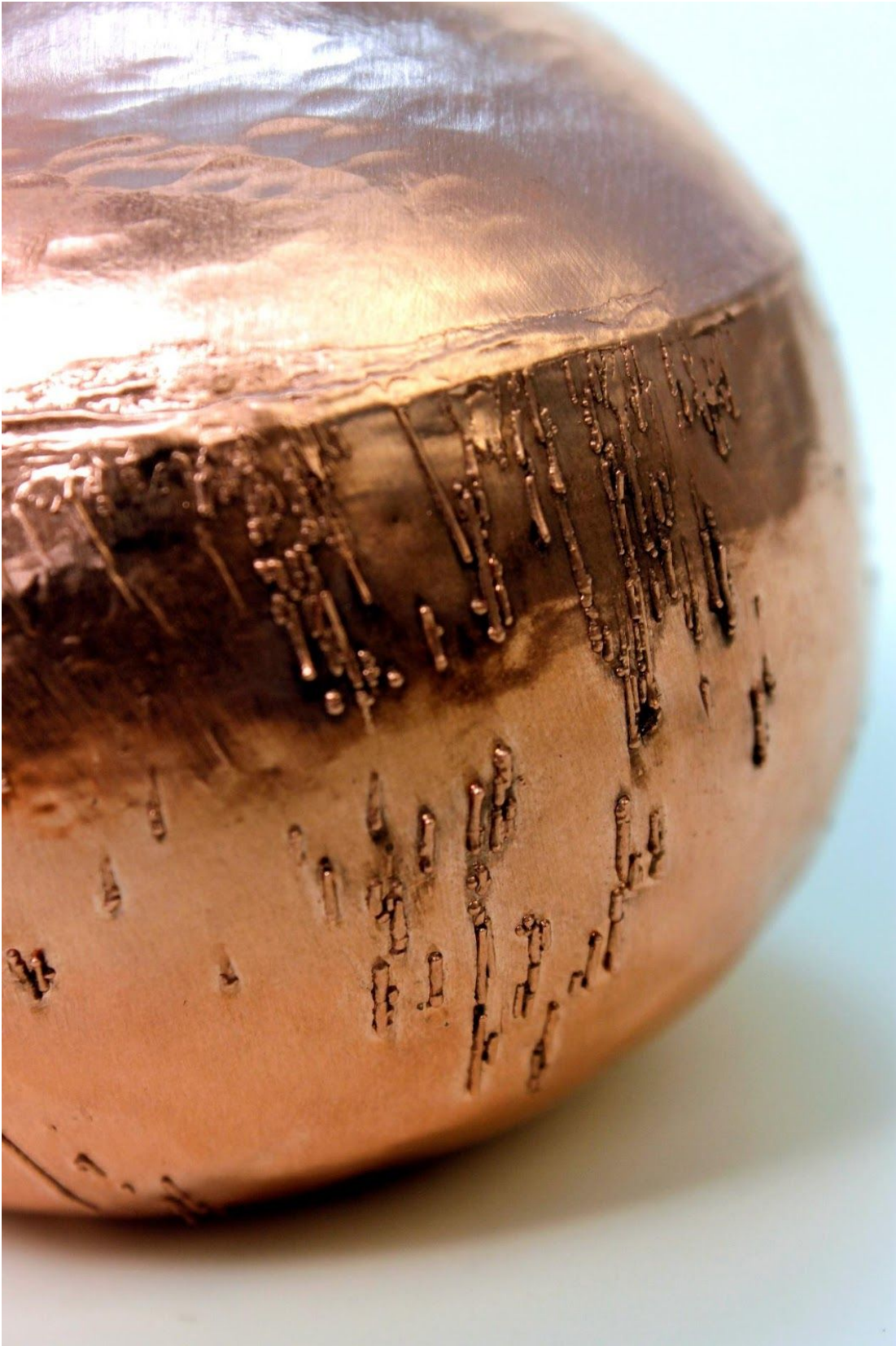
These boxes act as both place holders and vessels of all these things that I cannot firmly hold. *Dug in, Dug out*, discusses sense of place and its ties to attachment. For this piece, I visited places from my past that are significant to me; three childhood homes, Roosevelt National Forest, Red feather Lakes, and my grandad's home on the Chesapeake Bay. Once there, I used my fingers to dig out a hole in the ground at these sights. Molten metal was then cast into these holes. The cooled material is a physical imprint of the earth it was poured into. Each casting serves as a record or physical image of these very specific sites that I can no longer inhabit and have watched change over time.

Title	Original Format
Figure 1: Nothing to hold I	Copper, 3 ½ in X 3 ½ in
Figure 2: Nothing to Hold I, detail	
Figure 3: Nothing to Hold II	Copper, 3 1/3 in x 3 in
Figure 4: Nothing to Hold II, detail	
Figure 5: Nothing to Hold III	Copper, 3 ¾ in x 3 in
Figure 6: Nothing to Hold III, detail	
Figure 7: Nothing to Hold III, detail	
Figure 8: Nothing to Hold IV	Copper, 4 ½ in x 1 in
Figure 9: Nothing to Hold V	Copper, 2 ¾ in x 3 ½ in
Figure 10: Nothing to Hold V,	
Figure 11: Nothing to Hold V, detail	Copper, 3 ¾ in x 2 2/3 in
Figure 12: Nothing to Hold VI, detail	
Figure 13: Nothing to Hold VII	Copper, 4 1/3 in x 3 in
Figure 14: Dug in, Dug out	wood, silver, bronze, 52 in x 36 in
Figure 15: Dug in, Dug out, detail	
Figure 16: Dug in, Dug out, detail	
Figure 17: Dug in, Dug out, detail	
Figure 18: Dug in, Dug out, detail	





**Figure 1: Nothing to Hold I**



**Figure 2: Nothing to Hold I, detail**





**Figure 3: Nothing to Hold II**



**Figure 4: Nothing to Hold II, detail**





**Figure 5: Nothing to Hold III**



**Figure 6: Nothing to Hold III, detail**



**Figure 7: Nothing to Hold III, detail**





**Figure 8: Nothing to Hold IV**



**Figure 9: Nothing to Hold V**





**Figure 10: Nothing to Hold V, detail**





**Figure 11: Nothing to Hold VI**



**Figure 11: Nothing to Hold VI, detail**



Figure 12: Nothing to Hold VII



**Figure 13: Nothing to Hold VII, detail**





**Figure 14: Dug in, Dug out**



Figure 15: Dug in, Dug out, detail



**Figure 16: Dug in, Dug out, detail**





Figure 17: Dug in, Dug out, detail



**Figure 18: Dug in, Dug out, detail**