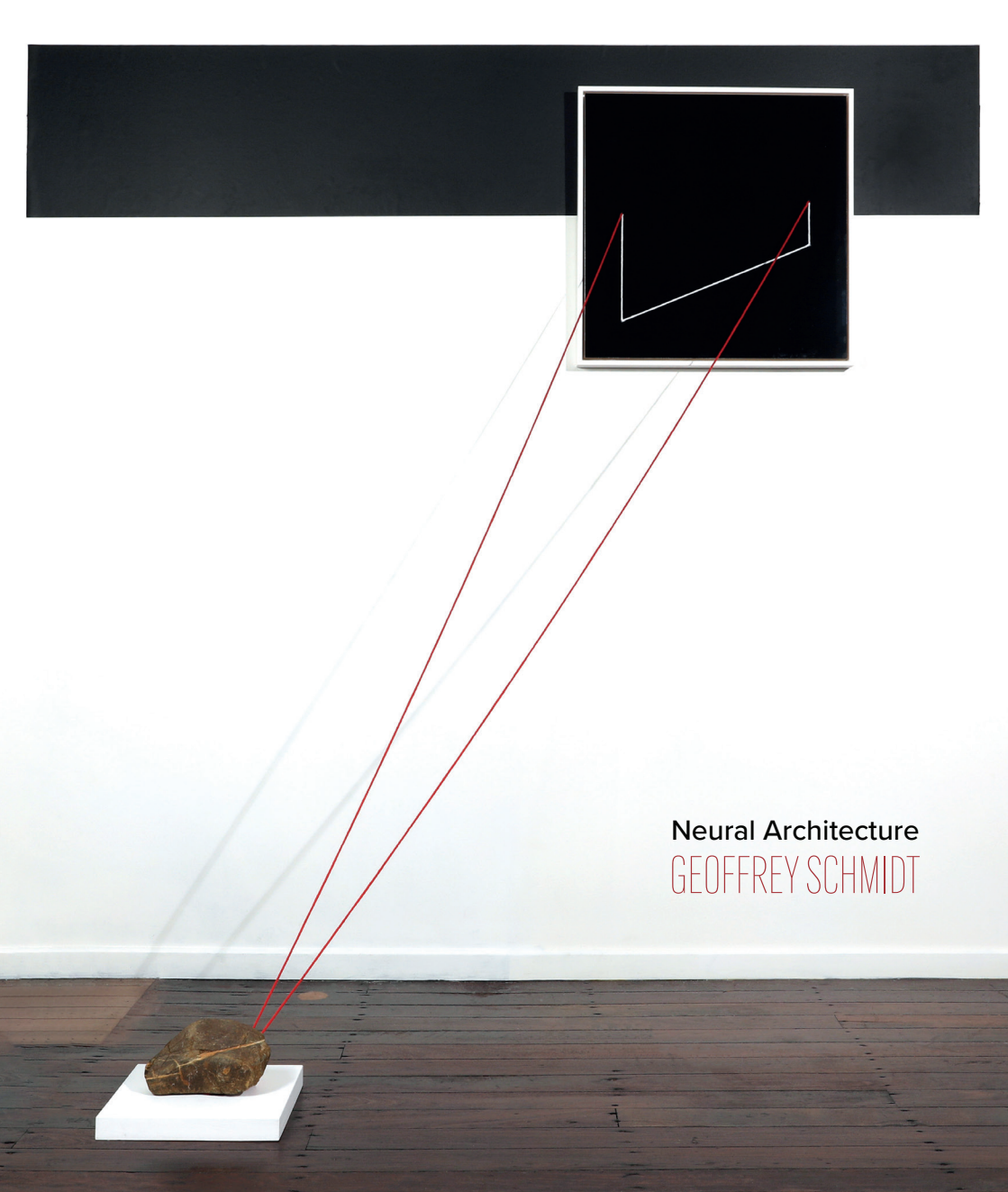
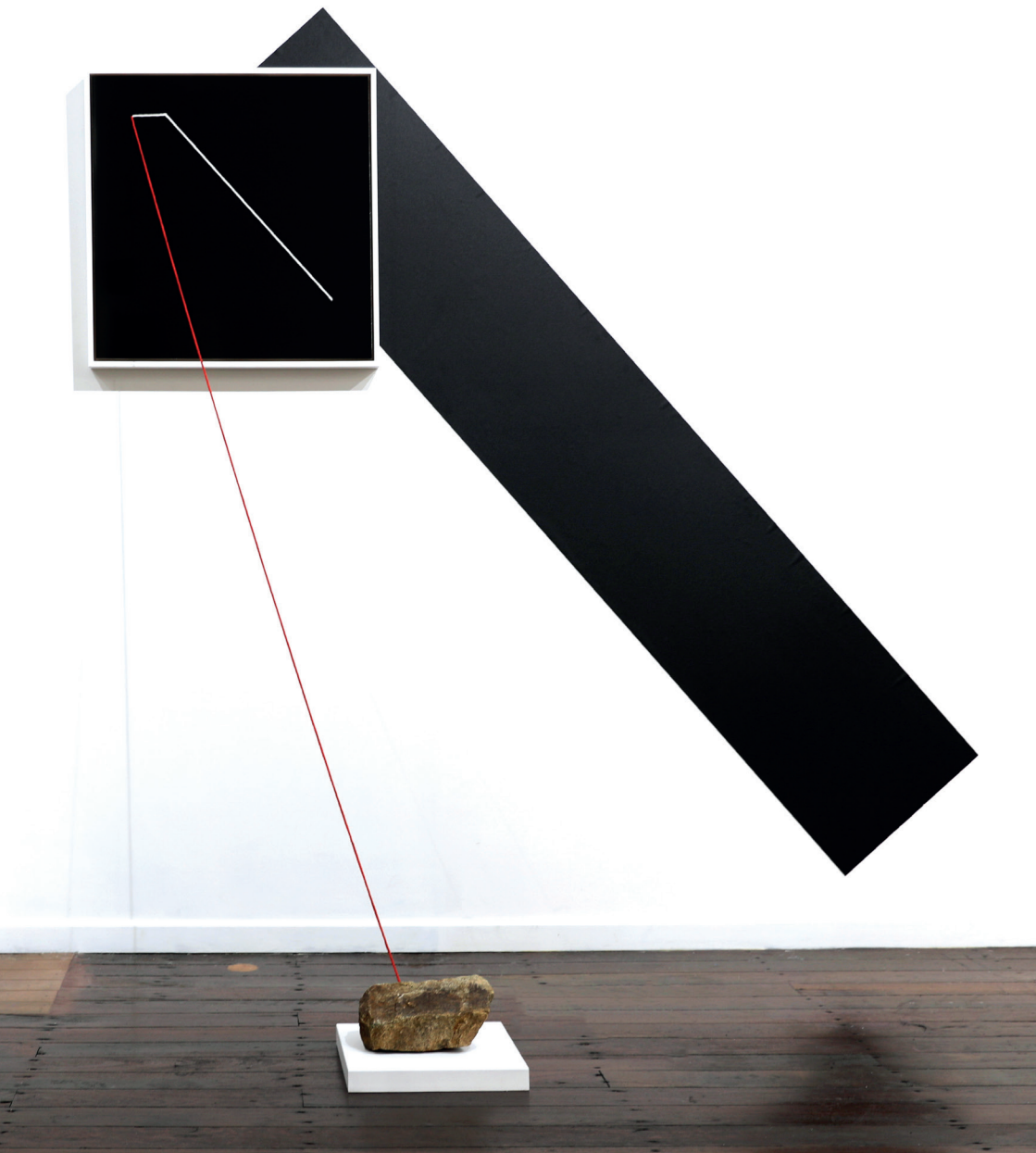




Neural Architecture
GEOFFREY SCHMIDT



Neural Architecture explores the complex interplay between memory, perception, and the intricate pathways that link our internal experiences to the external world. Using a combination of black vinyl blocks, red and white strings, and rocks, the exhibition presents memory as a bridge connecting past, present, and future. It invites viewers to reflect on the abstract, fleeting nature of memory and its profound influence on identity and lived experience.

At its essence, *Neural Architecture* envisions memory as a map – not a conventional map with clear coordinates or measurable distances, but an abstract landscape of paths leading toward unknowable destinations. These are maps without clear questions or answers, resisting utilitarian interpretation and instead embracing philosophical exploration. They prompt viewers to contemplate how individual experiences intersect with collective understanding, resulting in ever-shifting forms that defy easy definition.

Central to the exhibition is a series of framed black boxes (each 60 x 60cm) encased in white box frames. These boxes represent the boundless, enigmatic depths of the mind. The blackness inside suggests the infinite and unknowable facets of memory and layers inherited through ancestry and shaped by personal experience. The use of black highlights depth, mystery, and the vast unseen strata of the psyche, where the raw material of lived experience and imagined reality resides.

In contrast, the strings act as symbolic connectors within this conceptual landscape. White threads embody the internal receptors of sensory and emotional information, the pathways that allow us to gather, store, and recall memories. Red threads, meanwhile, serve as metaphors for the neural architecture of the brain itself, illustrating the web of connections that project memories into internal perceptions or externalize them into tangible objects and events. Together, the threads suggest memory not as a static archive but as a living, dynamic network, constantly shaped by change and individual interpretation.

Rocks provide another key element in *Neural Architecture*, symbolising the impermanence, individuality, and subjectivity of memory. Each rock, unique in color, shape, structure, and composition, stands for a specific memory. Yet, like memory, these rocks are impermanent; subject to decay and transformation over time. They are deeply personal artifacts, intelligible only to their creator at the moment of formation, mirroring memory's ever-evolving, ephemeral nature.

Philosophically, the exhibition also engages with the concept of "architectonics", the systematic organisation and interrelation of knowledge. Immanuel Kant described human reason as inherently architectonic, aiming to organise knowledge into a cohesive whole. In this context, the solid black vinyl blocks (outside the framed compositions) represents a foundational intellectual structure. Its monolithic simplicity suggests a basic system of meaning, evoking unity and minimalism as essential to philosophical inquiry. This stark form challenges viewers to consider the core elements that underlie human understanding, resonating with Kant's vision of reason's striving toward systematic completeness and illuminating the tension between abstraction and meaning in both art and thought.

Ultimately, *Neural Architecture* asks viewers to reconsider how memory operates both personally and collectively. It rejects the notion of memory as a fixed or accurate record, instead proposing it as an evolving, philosophical idea, a shifting map of connections that merge individual experience with collective consciousness into something elusive and unknowable. Memory, here, becomes less a repository of facts than a pathway to deeper self-awareness and relational understanding.

Through its careful selection of materials and conceptual layering, *Neural Architecture* builds a bridge between art and philosophy, creating a space where memory is not merely revisited but reimagined. It challenges us to see the familiar anew and to embrace the complexity and contradictions of our inner landscapes, transforming memory from a static relic into a dynamic, mysterious force that continually shapes our reality.

- Geoffrey Schmidt, 2025

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1 August - 14 September 2025 | www.umbrella.org.au/neural-architecture

Images | Front: Geoffrey Schmidt, *Neural Architecture N02*, 2025, Oil paint on aluminium, string and rocks, 60 x 60cm panel with installation of variable dimensions. Photograph: Amanda Galea. **| Page 1:** Geoffrey Schmidt, *Neural Architecture N01*, 2025, Oil paint on aluminium, string and rocks, 60 x 60cm panel with installation of variable dimensions. Photograph: Amanda Galea. **Back:** Geoffrey Schmidt, *Neural Architecture N08* (detail), 2025, Oil paint on aluminium, string and rocks, 60 x 60cm panel with installation of variable dimensions. Photograph: Geoffrey Schmidt.

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Umbrella respectfully acknowledges the Wulgurukaba of Gurambilbarra and Yunbenun and our region's surrounding groups - Bindal, Gugu Badhan, Nywaigi, Warrgamay, Bandjin and Gudjal - as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather, share and celebrate local creative practice. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first people of Australia. They have never ceded sovereignty and remain strong in their enduring connection to land and Culture.

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