

## *On Hold (Opus Number 1)*

Narelle Desmond

Gertrude Glasshouse

Friday 26 May - Saturday 24 June 2023

Taking its name from one of the most recognised on-hold music tracks, *On Hold (Opus Number 1)*, this exhibition speaks of a “comfort tone” of the 21st century. A barely audible synthetic noise that dulls us into a new sense of being—one that is uniform, generic and bland.

In the late twentieth century, sociologist George Ritzer described the process of a society adopting characteristics of a fast-food restaurant—specifically efficiency, calculability, predictability and control. Ritzer’s line of thinking had already been explored decades earlier by countercultural groups including the Italian Radical Designers of the 1960s, whose works speculated on the potential effects of globalisation.

In *On Hold (Opus Number 1)*, Narelle Desmond considers how the standardising effects outlined by Ritzer affect our present-day understanding of the world, especially when we consider the experimental and radical attitudes of makers from the 1960s in retrospect. The exhibition embodies a waiting room—a space where everything seems to be derived from another era, but no one really notices or cares. As cultural theorist Mark Fisher put it, “cultural time has folded back on itself.” Indeed, here time appears to be stagnated.

### Acknowledgements

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Narelle Desmond is represented by The Renshaws, Meanjin Brisbane.

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Gertrude Glasshouse is generously supported by Michael Schwarz and David Clouston.

Event partner

**BODRIGGY**

Media partner

**The Monthly** **The Saturday Paper** **7am**



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## List of works

1. Narelle Desmond  
*While We Were Dozing*, 2023  
Fluted glass door, vinyl decal,  
wooden pelmet  
2050 x 2050mm
2. Narelle Desmond  
*Opus Number 1 (On Hold Music)*, 2023  
Second-hand clock, faux granite finish,  
polyurethane coated high-density foam,  
wall phone, pyrite  
Dimensions variable
3. Narelle Desmond  
*Pratone Mock Up (T-wall and Frame)*, 2023  
MDF wall, print, wooden frame  
1600 x 2400mm
4. Narelle Desmond  
*Stendig Calendar on Excel Logo Wallpaper*, 2023  
Vinyl, paper  
2400 x 2007mm
5. Narelle Desmond  
*4 Principles of McDonaldization*, 2023  
Ex-McDonalds bench seats,  
4 clocks, vinyl  
Dimensions variable

