

“SO WE MUST MEET APART—YOU THERE—I HERE—WITH JUST THE DOOR
AJAR THAT OCEANS ARE—AND PRAYER—AND THAT PALE SUSTENANCE—
DESPAIR—“ and “I CANNOT LIVE WITH YOU—IT WOULD BE LIFE—AND LIFE IS
OVER THERE—BEHIND THE SHELF”

—Emily Dickinson, (640)

1993 Ongoing

My works in the exhibition “From Things You Can’t Remember, To Things You Can’t Forget” are attempts at infiltrating the traditional viewing space and the expected experience normal to a viewing audience. Both are platforms for in-between spaces culled from that segue . . . The porch.

A replication of a summer porch screen door which the viewer must enter in order to access the main gallery, the door acts not as a barricade to the show, but rather as a portal, the inlet porch is hardly visually impairing or physically sufficient to veil the space that separates the viewer from the work, yet logistically necessary to access it. The screen is an apparition, rendering the latent sound of the creaking springs as passage is initiated, in an activation of the metaphoric space between the artwork, viewer, artist and exhibition context. Cited from the last stanza of an Emily Dickinson poem, “SO WE MUST MEET APART—YOU THERE—I HERE—WITH JUST THE DOOR AJAR THAT OCEANS ARE—AND PRAYER—AND THAT PALE SUSTENANCE—DESPAIR—“, the title implies the emotional and physical separation inherent in the screen inference, as well as an exaggerated hope of recognition. The recognition however, seems hollow as the allusion to the summer as the screen cackles behind the viewer, reminding them the days are shortening and of the impending winter.

The companion piece, entitled, “I CANNOT LIVE WITH YOU—IT WOULD BE LIFE—AND LIFE IS OVER THERE—BEHIND THE SHELF”, comes from the first stanza of the same Dickinson Poem, taking the form of a proclamation of love desired, yet defined as folly. As a two-seated porch swing of the same ilk as its sister screen door, the installation abuts itself to the wall. Seated in the swing, the ability to swing backwards is afforded, but the follow through confronts the viewer’s feet to the wall, rendering the wall a stepping threshold that metaphorically marries the viewer to the marks made from feet stopping their motion—keeping them, as it were, from “LIFE [. . .] BEHIND THE SHELF”. The swing ruminates some essence of the freedom, while the wall acts to further incarcerate the viewer with the false sense of springing forth. (Seinfeld: The Serenity Now, Season 9, Episode 3, 1997).