

# DIGITAL SABBATH

Creative research works by Dr Julia Morris and Dr Lisa Paris

# CREDITS

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Front cover image: Lisa Paris, 2019, Black Sun, 40x40cm, oil over acrylic underlay on canvas.



# DIGITAL SABBATH

*Digital Sabbath: the practice of regularly unplugging from a digital technology for a period of time. In this study, participants unplugged from all digital devices for one day per week over a three month period.*

Calls for a Digital Sabbath practice first came to light over a decade ago as the internet reached ubiquitous status. However, online immersion has increased over time and now daily interaction with digital technologies are a routine part of life for people everywhere. Market research has identified that technology use is continuing to rise, with 47% of respondents in a survey of 3500 individuals across all continents spending more than five hours per day on their mobile phones alone (Lu 2017).

The online environment offers a range of benefits but it is also known to contribute to stress, a decline in authentic relationships and meaningful connection to others.

The context for the Digital Sabbath research was education. As contemporary education contexts evolve, the stress teachers experience can increase responsively as new challenges overlay onto what is already a difficult professional context - it is well documented that attrition rates for new teachers can reach as much as 40% in the first five years (Le Cornu 2013; Schaefer, Long and Clandinin 2012).

The attrition of all teachers, especially for early career teachers who are in their first five years, is attributable to a range of variables, however stress emerges as a key driver. Stress is exerted by both workplace factors and constant exposure to others because of online immersion with email, social media (Ugur and Koc 2015) and a belief that teachers need to be available to others 24/7.

This exhibition follows nine individuals' journeys as they unplug from technology for a day a week over a three month period. Seven of the participants are trained early career teachers. The remaining two participants, Dr Lisa Paris and Dr Julia Morris are both researchers and senior lecturers who train secondary visual arts teachers. They participated alongside the early career teachers to have an embodied experience of the Digital Sabbath practice to support their interviews with the remaining seven participants and their understanding of the Digital Sabbath phenomenon.

The works in this show are intended to convey each individual's experience of the Digital Sabbath practice, and the benefits and challenges of (not) using technology.

Julia Morris and Lisa Paris, 2020.

# PARTICIPANTS

Portraits in charcoal by Lisa Paris



# RESEARCHER RESPONSES TO THE DIGITAL SABBATH



Lisa Paris, The digital sabbath and the digital distraction, 1x2m, oil on canvas.

*A note about composition: Where typically a painting would have a clear focal point (or perhaps two in the case of a diptych) in this work we are denied this convention and instead 'distraction' is deliberately employed as a conceptual device. Motifs from the Digital Sabbath paintings play out across the surface of each canvas pulling the viewer's eye from object to element, from centre to edge, from top to bottom and one plane (and canvas) to another. Data points fly across the surface further exacerbating discomfort. There is a kind of structural exhaustion encapsulated in the construction of this painting - because this is precisely how the digital distraction works in 'real' life.*

# SUMMARY OF THE DIGITAL SABBATH EXPERIENCE

As we began our Digital Sabbath journey each of the participants in my group expressed concern about the many hours they felt they 'wasted' online. Several worried that they did not even really have a clear sense of how much time was involved but suspected it was sufficient to be termed an 'addiction'. Others in the group simply wanted to make better use of 'lost' time and desired a return to their abandoned creative practice, more meaningful time with family and friends, or simply getting outdoors into the fresh air. Despite its obvious benefits, technology and online interaction seemed to have 'taken' something from us and we wanted to reclaim this part of our lives.

As the project reached fruition everyone agreed that participation in the DS project had facilitated important changes. Where previously none of us, myself included, had really appreciated the extent of our online immersion we now had heightened awareness. We hesitated before turning our technology back on after the DS break; we resolved with increasing determination to honour our commitment to our practice (this, despite the reality that few of us actually achieved an entirely uninterrupted 24 hours offline in any week). While none of us believed it likely that we would continue the practice in its original form, we all considered we could (and likely would) make the decision to regularly opt out and go offline - especially when social-media fatigue, technology-saturation or disconnection from the important things in our lives arose. Awareness had led to insight, which in turn led to empowerment and agency.



Left: Julia Morris, *Disconnect*, 1x1m, acrylic and chalk on canvas.  
Right: Julia Morris, *Reconnect*, 1x1m, acrylic and chalk on canvas.

At the beginning of the Digital Sabbath experience the participants in my group expressed a sense of disconnection - both physical and mental - as a result of their technology use. They reported spending time on their digital devices as a way of escaping the busy world of work and family, often using the time to zone out and 'relax'. However, they also expressed a desire to minimise their technology use. They explained that their dependence on technology was a habit, and that they hadn't always used their devices as much as they were currently. The desire to re-think priorities and change habits were key drivers of their participation in the study.

At the conclusion of the experience all participants, including myself, had noted natural environments as being a positive outcome of the Digital Sabbath experience. They either purposefully went outside on Sabbath days or found themselves less tempted to be on their devices when outdoors. Nature, it seems, had a calming effect on the participants and helped them to regain agency. It provided them with a space to reflect on their habits, and form new habits that were largely centred on spending time with loved ones in the great outdoors. As participants in this group were located both regionally and in the Perth metropolitan there were a variety of environments depicted in the series produced. Yet the common theme remains, being in natural environments grounds us and helps us to recalibrate when we need it.



## PARTICIPANT A

*"My involvement occurred during a period in which a health issue was impacting someone close to me. I was spending a significant amount of time online trying to understand the diagnosis and life was stressful. I wondered whether my time in the virtual arena was hindering rather than helping and enacted a DS as a wellbeing intervention."*

The first work in this series is intended to convey a sense of the 'maladies' from which I initially hoped the online environment might afford distraction. When digital distraction itself seemed to add another layer of stress, I opted out. There was a restorative quality in the offline experience and in 'Waiting I' the blooms that wrap around the figures are intended to act as a visual counterpoint to calligraphic text on the bodies which augur approaching difficulty.

Lisa Paris, Waiting I, 40x40cm, oil over acrylic underlay on canvas.



*"Regular time offline provided an opportunity for reflection, problem solving and forward planning. I gained a level of acceptance and learned to take things a day at a time."*

The second work in this series employs little cats as visual metaphors - silent sentinels that wait and watch and bear witness as decisions and choices of others change everything.

Lisa Paris, Waiting II, 40x40cm, oil over acrylic underlay on canvas.



*"I learned that even the simplest things in life become fraught endeavours without accurate information at one's fingertips, for example, navigating a route from the familiar to the unknown is an incredibly difficult enterprise without a map - and few of us have reliable hardcopy versions of those anymore."*

This work illustrates a sense of jumping through hoops, of frustration and even anger, of throwing one's hands into the air and almost giving up. Life offline offered a respite from brick walls that seemed to spring up everywhere.

Lisa Paris, Waiting III, 40x40cm, oil over acrylic underlay on canvas.



*"It often seemed as if the Digital Sabbath experience might never end. This was 'Winter' and the lines of communication were definitely down."*

The fourth work employs a darker, cooler colour scheme to convey a sense of hopelessness that often infiltrated daily life during that period. Time spent offline with loved ones underscored and separated things that were important from those that were not. There were moments of warmth but the emotional climate was definitely colder.

Lisa Paris, *Waiting IV*, 40x40cm, oil over acrylic underlay on canvas.



*"For me, the real gift of unplugging from the digital distraction was the moment of clarity and insight that quiet reflection affords."*

As the Digital Sabbath period reached conclusion I realised that in many ways the DS experience was itself a metaphor for life. We cannot go back to the time before (before technology changed everything), but we can choose our level of exposure to contemporary.

Lisa Paris, Waiting V, 40x40cm, oil over acrylic underlay on canvas.

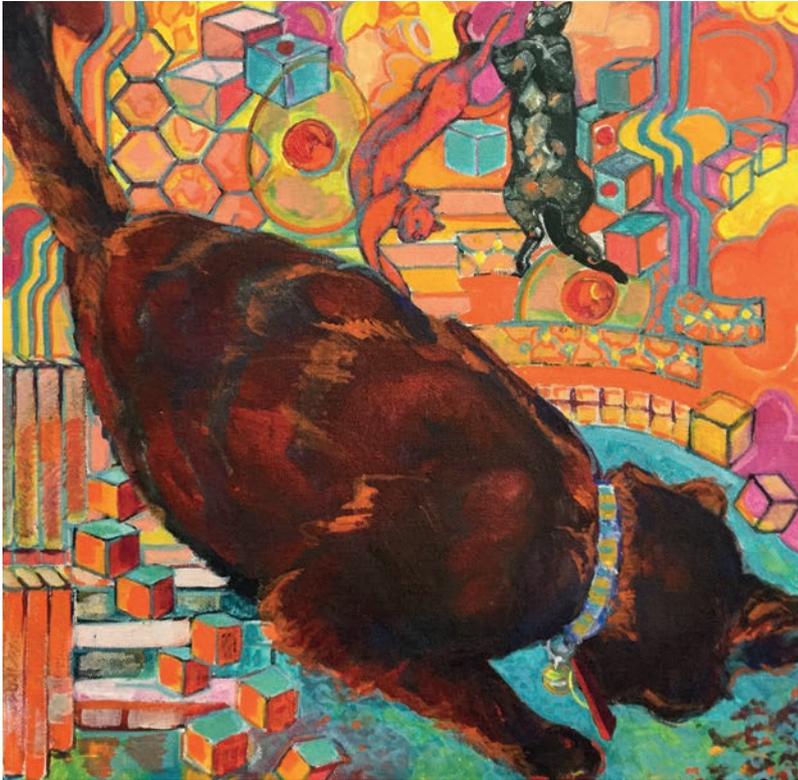


## PARTICIPANT B

*"I'm hoping that by clearing clutter I might actually be able to clear some headspace."*

This work explores participant B's desire to break long established patterns of working continuously, especially during weekends. She said she planned to tidy her studio during her time offline and hoped that by making 'physical' space, she could also clear 'psychological' clutter and create an environment more conducive to creative practice. This simple image is intended to convey a sense of being buried or trapped, of kicking and pushing, of breaking out into clear space.

Lisa Paris, Making space, 40x40cm, oil over acrylic underlay on canvas.



*"I'm actually thinking of moving - sorting out my study, clearing clutter from my studio, has given me a push."*

This work reflects a 'domino' experience; the act of tidying her studio prompted this participant to think about moving house. Here, the cat acts as a metaphor for the phenomenon of 'change' itself - the smallest shift engenders a response; change affords further change. Possessions piled high teeter as 'change' waits, poised to respond if anything moves - and move it does. The process of packing up her studio triggered a bigger move - the move to a new home.

Lisa Paris, Move one thing - things move, 40x40cm, acrylic on canvas.



*"I'm spending quite a bit of time driving. I need to be contactable ... I need to use my phone ... just for texts."*

This work represents the tension between the demands that others made on Participant B during her Digital Sabbath and her aspiration to stay at home. Despite her desire to use her day offline to be more creative, she needed to communicate with family via text. This image overlays two 'experiential universes' as desire and commitment intersected. A black hole begins to open and time is sucked into the void.

Lisa Paris, Chilling with cats and driving in cars, 40x40cm, acrylic on canvas.



*"I've put the move on hold for a while ... it's a time issue ... but I will move ... its really time."*

This work explores the concept of 'home' as a physical embodiment of self and one's place in the world. Notions of leaving home engender internal conflict. Here red and green are imbued with oppositional meaning - a green self waits 'ready to go' while another red self 'holds ground'; movement and stillness compete in a psychological tug of war. Home is identity and relinquishing one's sense of self can be difficult even when change will be good.

Lisa Paris, Domicile, 40x40cm, oil over acrylic underlay on canvas.

*Acknowledgement: Conceptual influence for this work drawn from Manson's 'Figure through a doorway'.*



*"I've been in this house for years, so much stuff, the place is dilapidated. I just need time to go through it all."*

This work explores objects as embodiments of ideas: aesthetic values, psychological constructs and emotional connections. Participant B's collections were expressions of herself, but their clutter limited her creative output. The Digital Sabbath project necessitated willpower to break her online addiction and gave her agency – she could go offline and clear clutter without any negative consequence.

Lisa Paris, *Meditations on the meaning of things when leaving one's home*, 40x40cm, acrylic on canvas.  
*Acknowledgement: reference photos for the glass objects provided by participant B.*



## PARTICIPANT C

*"Being offline when we're waiting for stuff like food to arrive can be a bit of an inconvenience, plus my phone is my alarm, and no one has an old UBD in their cars anymore - we all use maps. It's difficult to disconnect, but I also hate the way we get lost going down the rabbit hole."*

This work explores ideas of creating one's home or 'nesting'. The golden egg (the great Australian dream perhaps) acts both as a symbol for security as well as the implied possibility of a future family. Feather down nests wrap around ambiguous figures creating a cocoon in which there is structural tension. Inhabitants are asleep or frozen - unable to move, a feeling 'C' had when not able to access her devices.

Lisa Paris, We're building our home, 40x40cm, acrylic on canvas.



*"Unfortunately no ... I haven't really managed to get through a whole 24 hours yet ... lots of interruptions ... I keep trying!"*

The indispensable essential nature of technology in daily life was a dominant theme for Participant C and she struggled to complete even one unbroken 24-hour period offline. For 'C' renovating a home was a reflexive endeavour, which demanded an immediate response to problems in real time as they arose. This work explores the challenging nature of contemporary project management when constrained by zero technology access. In this image things look a little unstable, as though they might come apart and topple with one good push - the build (both physical and psychological) seems precarious.

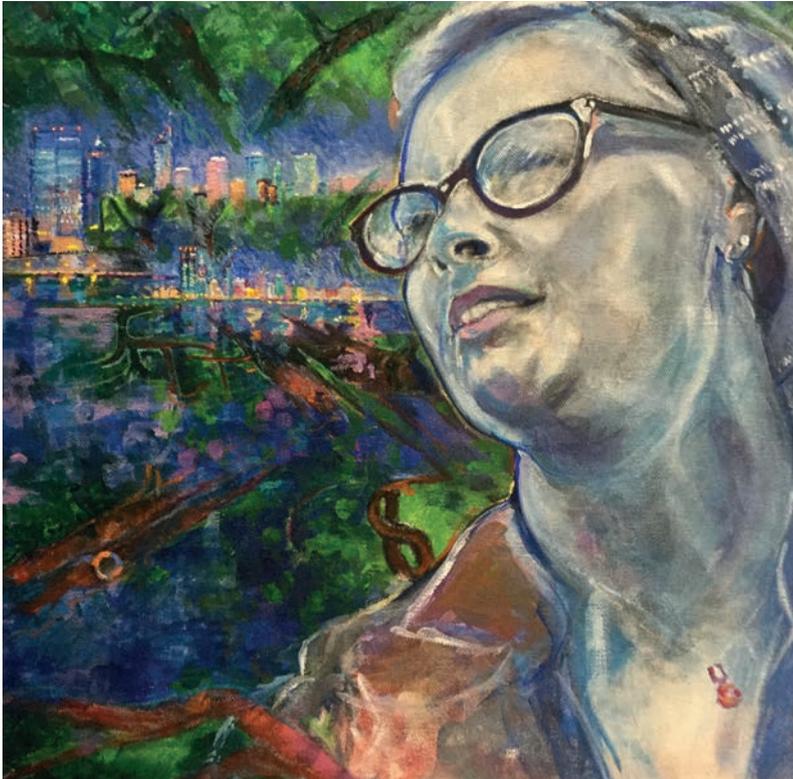
Lisa Paris, *We're connected*, 40x40cm, oils over acrylic underlay on canvas.



*"Its difficult ... there's a television in every room and even outside ... cricket is constantly on. We have had family staying with us and trying to explain is difficult ... you can't really say sorry I'm not participating when everyone is watching a movie together."*

The image presents an ordered environment that references popular culture (property games such as Monopoly) whilst interlocking figures form a chainlike configuration. There is tension here - little green house motifs create a tiny neighbourhood around a red environment reminiscent of a womb. Colour choices function simultaneously as companions and harbingers of conflict - a reminder perhaps that others, quite reasonably, may not always share our enthusiasm for the idea of a Digital Sabbath.

Lisa Paris, *Threads*, 40x40cm, oils over acrylic underlay on canvas.



*"I didn't want to get rid of everything ... lots of it is really productive, really good. I just hated the way a little break from marking could suddenly turn into 2 hours of wasted time. I wasn't even really interacting with anyone, just scrolling aimlessly ... completely pointless. I'd rather work on a sculpture than lose 2 hours on Facebook®".*

This work explores her initial motivations for participation in the DS project. A distant city (intended as a representation of the digital distraction) is set in competing relationship with slices of lush garden (metaphors for relaxation and enhanced wellbeing) which dissolve into a 'no man's land' of water. There is a yearning in the face of the figure but nothing more is happening. Desire remains separated from realisation.

Lisa Paris, Trying not to procrastinate whilst procrastinating not trying, 40x40cm, acrylic on canvas.



*"I've managed to break the habit - the down the rabbit hole experience - I don't even really miss it. Now I find I'm on social media less and less but I'm still accessing the productive stuff ... information gathering. Basically, I'm more aware I guess ... I'm more in control ... that's the main difference."*

This work dissolves the boundaries between the physical and the virtual, the viable and the unachievable. Time off technology now occurs in shorter blocks replacing the idea of an immutable unbroken 24 hour period that must be 'endured'. There is progress now - 'things' are being built as she makes the DS practice her own. She identified the ability to choose the desired level of technology exposure as the real benefit and legacy of her DS experience. Participant C lives with her husband and their dog and is still working on the renovations to create that individual nest she so desires.

Lisa Paris, Synthesis, 40x40cm, acrylic on canvas.



Lisa Paris, Sky light, 40x40cm, acrylic on canvas.

## PARTICIPANT D

*"My partner and friends were really supportive. We found ourselves talking about our childhood memories; things that we'd never shared before. I just put the phone away and listened and read and walked and started really seeing things."*

This work explores ideas about 'ways of being'. Participant D wanted to spend time in the open air, to disconnect from her devices, to connect more with others - to live more in the physical than the virtual world. She felt optimistic about the possible benefits of a Digital Sabbath but had reservations about how people around her would respond. In this image the canopy assumes a soothing form - it is an invitation, an offer, something restorative and nurturing. This is a quiet place of filtered light - different from the everyday, a chance to simply 'be'.



*"A few people couldn't understand what I was doing: what was the point? Was I being compensated? How long would this go on for? What was I hoping to achieve? Others thought it was inspiring - one friend turned her technology off as well. I'm not sure how she went but I think it's really interesting that my going offline kind of gave her permission to opt out too".*

This work explores the disconnection Participant D described as she began her Digital Sabbath practice. The simple act of shutting down all devices became something more than itself. In its own way each was radical act - a rejection of the status quo and an act of power and politics as much as a wellbeing intervention.

Lisa Paris, Go outside, 40x40cm, acrylic on canvas.



*"I began seeing things I hadn't noticed before such as quirky little street signs on the roads near where I lived proclaiming 'Cross Generational Homes' and the like (no doubt a forgotten art project from years ago). It was fascinating! I was really seeing things the way I used to years ago when I'd catch the train to uni - before technology transformed everything."*

This work describes the experience of surrendering oneself to light. As Participant D walked along the streets of her suburb on her day offline she found herself feeling as if she was seeing things for the first time - or seeing them for the first time in a long time. Here, a small figure walks with a metaphorical little dog along a blazing golden path of intense pure light. Pausing for a moment she looks up and finds herself transfixed. Everything is more real and intense than before - this is life offline.

Lisa Paris, Black sun, 40x40cm, oil over acrylic underlay on canvas.



*"There were bees! The light was intense!"*

In the fourth painting in this set the surrender experience intensifies as absorption increases. The Digital Sabbath experience is radical, consuming, transformative.

Lisa Paris, Sky walking, 40x40cm, oil over acrylic underlay on canvas.



*"There are residual effects - a kind of confidence - I now feel fine to put my phone down and disappear for a while. If I'm marking I'll often leave my phone in another room. I feel I'm more disciplined. To be honest though, now that I'm back at school, it's getting a little annoying. I really just want to 'vege' out, relax and zone out with TV. My poor brain just wants a rest."*

This work describes the tension that Participant D experienced towards the end of her DS period. She found herself tiring of having to constantly explain her rationale to others who simply could not understand the point of the exercise. This painting plays with competing ideas about sacrifice (the commitment to the pursuit of knowledge) and the very human desire to simply relax. In this final image two constructed worlds co-exist in a multiverse relationship.

Lisa Paris, Black box, 40x40cm, oil over acrylic underlay on canvas.

## PARTICIPANT E

*"I worry about social media. I see all these people with amazing lives online, but then when you actually catch up with them it's a different story entirely. Its as if they put on this show especially for social media but just below the surface things are off. I guess I worry that maybe it's a bit like that for me too."*

This work engages with the theme of constructed realities, disconnection and isolation as well as the phenomenon of hyper-surveillance in the contemporary period.

Lisa Paris, As above - not so below, 40x40cm, acrylic on canvas.



*"I use my phone every day to stay in touch with everyone in my family and I struggled a bit when that stopped all at once. Lots of things that I hadn't really dealt with bubbled up - stuff to do with family, past relationships, friends. It was a bit of a shock to the system and I guess social media had been blocking me from feeling things I probably needed to. If I've learned anything, it's that I need to make time to connect with people much more in person."*

Participant E revealed that she had been caught off guard and taken by surprise at unexpected thoughts and feelings that had come to the fore during her time offline. She said she suddenly felt overwhelmed by memories and feelings from the distant past and realised that social media had been blocking her from experiencing unresolved feelings. This work explores the way in which digital distraction often acts as a sedative to one's emotional sensibilities - sometimes rendering our lives only half lived.

Lisa Paris, Can't turn my thoughts off, 40x40cm, oil over acrylic underlay on canvas.



*"I spent a lot of time at the beach - it was a way to nurture myself, to look after my body and my mind and just relax. I felt free and open - the sand and the sounds. I'm actually finding that the longer this goes on the less I'm in a hurry to reconnect after my day offline."*

Participant E spoke about water and the beach as her favourite places to go during her time offline - especially when stress bothered her. The water, sun and sand were soothing phenomena which had a restorative quality. The visual metaphors evoked by elemental forces are utilised in this work. Here, the soothing enveloping motion of water wraps around a little figure that surrenders herself to nature. Water functions as a metaphorical womb - nurturing, healing, rebuilding.

Lisa Paris, Water baby, 40x40cm, acrylic on canvas.



*"I was probably online multiple times every day before this - I was surfing rather than getting involved deeply. I suppose I felt a bit of an obligation to 'like' other people's posts but at the same time I wasn't really that invested. To that extent I guess I sort of felt a bit yucky - its not really real."*

The focus for this work is 'psychological erosion'. Here, social media chips and rubs and reshapes identity. Frozen figures stand motionless (like the coastline behind them), watching silently as life unfolds in some distant place. Data points ebb and flow across the surface of identity. We reform our shape responsively as others curate theirs.

Lisa Paris, Sand, 40x40cm, acrylic on canvas.

*Acknowledgement: reference photograph for the eroded coastline provided by A. Sigley*



*"I got my first phone when I was 13 so I remember what the world was like before ... in a way I feel as if I've lived through 3 different periods - a time of strong relationships, a time of superficial connections and now back to more authentic ways of relating. This experience has given me permission to disconnect from the noise - more than that I believe we actually have a right to disconnect."*

Despite embracing the online environment, E remembered a 'time before' when life seemed simpler - better. In many respects it was a yearning for a simpler life that she desired most. There is sense of nostalgia in this work. A solitary figure rugged up in warm clothing steels herself for what lies ahead as she ascends a steep stairway. She leaves behind a warm sunlit garden (the place of childhood) still in full bloom. Laptop under arm, the figure departs the warm place for a cooler destination ahead.

Lisa Paris, Leaving the forgotten garden, 40x40cm, acrylic on canvas.

Acknowledgement: reference photo provided by 'E'; concept for garden drawn from O. Suvorova, 2017, garden series

## PARTICIPANT F

*"El Capitan - I think it's a good analogy for how hard it is for me to put down technology when it dominates both personal and professional life."*

Technology is pervasive. It can be difficult to think about switching off when we spend so much of our work and personal time on digital devices. Stepping away from technology can feel impossible.



Julia Morris, El Capitan, 40x40cm, acrylic and chalk on board.



*"I checked my phone while I was on holiday! It is terrible having emails with me 24/7. I was lucky with my first experience, which felt a bit like I was cheating ... I was leaving the hotel in Ubud and flying back to Australia."*

Holidays are supposed to be relaxing. But it is easy to enjoy these experiences from behind a camera lens or a phone rather than living in the moment, a realisation that causes us to re-think our habits.

Julia Morris, Ubud, 40x40cm, acrylic and chalk on board.



*"I had an afternoon swim on the weekend. It was so nice to get out into the salt air and feel the wind at my back. Everybody was out."*

Perth has some of the best beaches in Australia. The feeling of being 'at home' near the water is part of our identity. We are lucky to have the salt air, to breathe it in, to exhale deeply and splash in the surf.

Julia Morris, Whitfords, 40x40cm, acrylic and chalk on board.



*"I had no urge to look at my phone. Also I wasn't distracted by TVs etc because we were in Denmark. What wasn't so good was our breakfast ... but it was nice to be out with friends."*

Time away gives us opportunities to do things we may not ordinarily do. The country air is restorative and you naturally fall into the slower pace, beginning to relax.

Julia Morris, Denmark, 40x40cm, acrylic and chalk on board.



*"I made a point of getting out and about with my Mum. We've been trying to exercise more and re-instate a weekend walk."*

Families. Their company cannot be matched. We can be with them in space without having to fill the void with words or acts. A simple walk with those you love can feed the soul.

Julia Morris, Yellagonga, 40x40cm, acrylic and chalk on board.



## PARTICIPANT G

*"Before it was mainly keeping in touch with certain friends. Now it's almost voyeuristic. I'm in a couple of chat pages ... it is really interesting getting involved in what their lives are about."*

Escapism. Social media is a trap that lures us in with promises of maintaining relationships with loved ones overseas. But somehow hours have passed and it is the lives of strangers that we've been watching. No connection, just the pleasure of wondering what other people are complaining about.

Julia Morris, *Escape from reality*, 40x40cm, acrylic and chalk on board.



*"I do carry my phone with me. It's the mum thing. I've gotta be able to be contactable by the kids or partner."*

Being a mother adds a complication to the Digital Sabbath. Your life is not your own, you're the conduit between family members. You're the contact when kids don't know who to turn to. You end up with all this traffic, some days worse than others. But you can't put it away, nor would you want to. You signed up for a lifetime of this.

Julia Morris, Quiet days, busy days, 40x40cm, acrylic and chalk on board.



*“For the first time in years I’m starting to sleep through the night ... not entirely sure why but it’s really good.”*

The world is so busy. Things are always moving, changing, shifting. It is good to stop and relax. When you wake up in the night you normally check your phone, play games. Now you sleep through. You feel better rested.

Julia Morris, Rest, 40x40cm, acrylic and chalk on board.



*"[My phone] goes beside the TV cabinet, not beside me. So I've then got to get up and go get it and if I'm sitting down."*

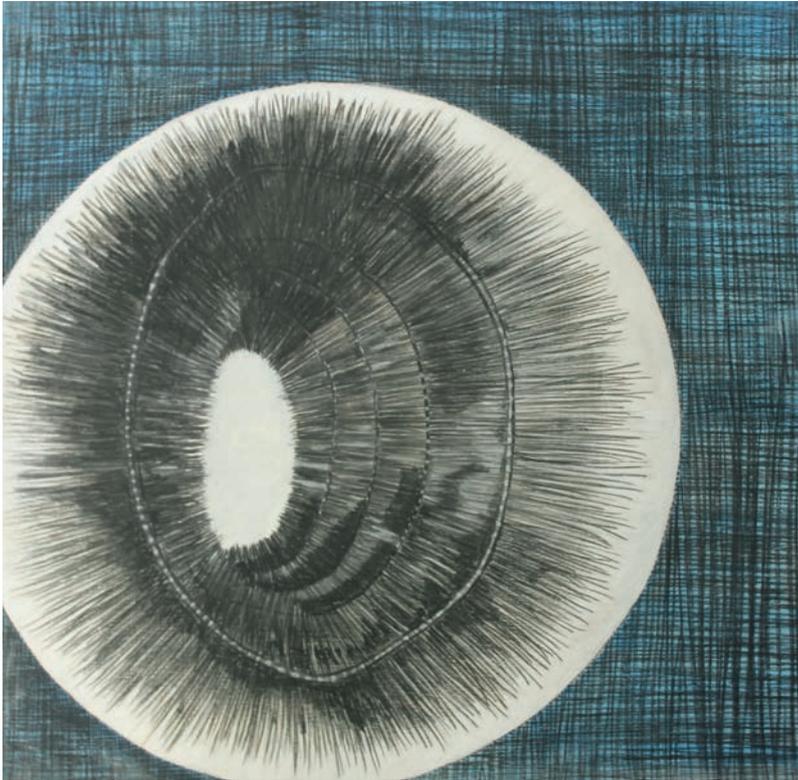
It is difficult being untethered from technology. It lives just an arm's reach away. We create mazes for ourselves, so that each step forces us to reconsider if we really need our phone, our iPad, our computer. The maze gives us agency.

Julia Morris, The maze, 40x40cm, acrylic and chalk on board.

## PARTICIPANT H

*"Social media is a black hole. It fills the void, fills the well."*

It is easy to be lost on social media for hours, without realising where time has gone. It is a seductive vortex that pulls you in. You start with one small piece of content, not realising that there are layers upon layers more to be revealed.



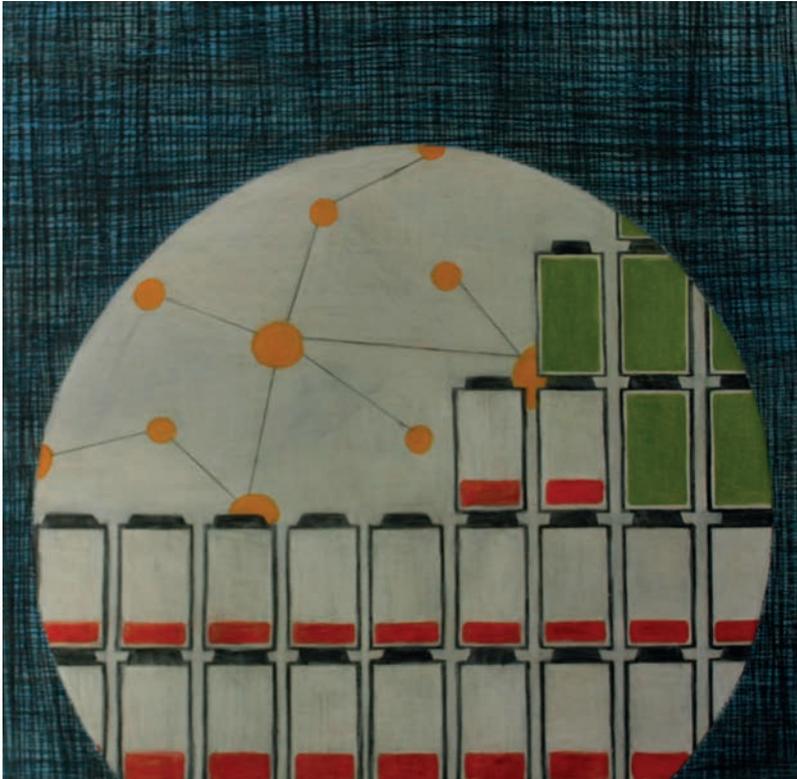
Julia Morris, Black hole, 40x40cm, acrylic and chalk on board.



*"But it is a good time for me to stop because I'm moving house. I have had too much happening to even pick up my phone!"*

The start of a journey, both physical and metaphorical. New beginnings can prompt new habits. They signal us to change behaviour.

Julia Morris, Long road, 40x40cm, acrylic and chalk on board.



*"I'm using social media to help me plan lessons that focus on the local community. But it is draining my energy."*

Technology isn't all bad. It can help us to work more efficiently and effectively. But at what cost? Somehow we go from feeling energised to drained in a matter of moments. Like the black hole, it is an effect that creeps up, giving you no warning.

Julia Morris, Flat batteries, 40x40cm, acrylic and chalk on board.



*“Now that I’ve stopped using my phone as a distraction, I have watched people more. I swam at the beach and spent time with my kids.”*

The water is restorative. Cleansing us and allowing us to start again. Away from technology we have space to be more social, to observe our surroundings, to relax.

Julia Morris, The jetty, 40x40cm, acrylic and chalk on board.



## PARTICIPANT I

*"I've moved so much, I need to connect."*

Moving away from home can make us feel isolated. Physically removed from those we love, we feel like we've lost our identity, we've lost a connection to our home, our friends, our family. These bright sparks that once made up our lives can seem distant, and we feel disconnected.

Julia Morris, Disconnect, 40x40cm, acrylic and chalk on board.



*"It has been good to enjoy the great outdoors. I'm not tempted to go on my phone."*

Being in nature is restorative. It brings us closer - to the earth, to each other. It helps us to reconnect. Each place feels different, and makes us feel different. When surrounded by vibrant colours, with nobody in sight, we don't need technology. We are happy to be in the moment.

Julia Morris, Northwest, 40x40cm, acrylic and chalk on board.



*"I'm isolated, but I want to see what other artists are doing."*

Making art is good for the soul. But the blank page stares out, wanting to be filled. When you don't know where to start it is easy to jump online, to see what other artists are doing. Your community awaits you and you are inspired by their latest works.

Julia Morris, Kaleidoscope, 40x40cm, acrylic and chalk on board.



*"I'm not tempted to go on my phone."*

Back out in the fresh air it is easy to put down the phone and enjoy what surrounds us. Stillness, calmness, relaxation - the peace that comes from being quietly in space.

Julia Morris, Peace, 40x40cm, acrylic and chalk on board.

*Participants' responses to the Digital Sabbath have been redacted from this copy of the Digital Sabbath Catalogue for copyright reasons.*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to collectively thank the Moores Building Contemporary Art Gallery, managed by the Fremantle Arts Centre, for hosting our exhibition of research works and supporting us in the lead up to this show and especially the Gallery Director Richie Kuhaupt for his guidance and support in the lead up to this show and especially the Gallery Director Richie Kuhaupt for his guidance and support in the lead up to this show. We thank both Edith Cowan University and Curtin University who have provided opportunities for us to undertake a non-traditional research study of this scale alongside our other duties. A special thanks goes to our research participants, without whom this exhibition and study would not be possible. They not only participated in the project but gave us incredible support as we prepared for the exhibition.

Lisa: Sincere thanks to Prof. Rhonda Oliver and Prof. John Williams for their generous support of this important research project in which the language of the arts reveals much about arts education experience in the early years of teaching. Kudos to everyone in my family who graciously tolerated the constraints of our 'no technology days', the smell of oil paint and my need to constantly talk about the rationale for opting out - you remain my motivation for everything and I love each of you more than I can possibly say. Special thanks to Sara who read, critiqued, discussed and reflected on the briefs, drawings and paintings as this project unfolded over more than 18 months. Liz and Judy for your observations and encouragement and good company over many catch up dinners. Finally to the wonderful early career teachers in my group who shared their experiences I wish to say a heartfelt thank you- your passion and dedication to your craft has been an inspiration!

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