

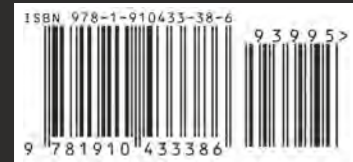
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AN TE LIU



AN TE LIU

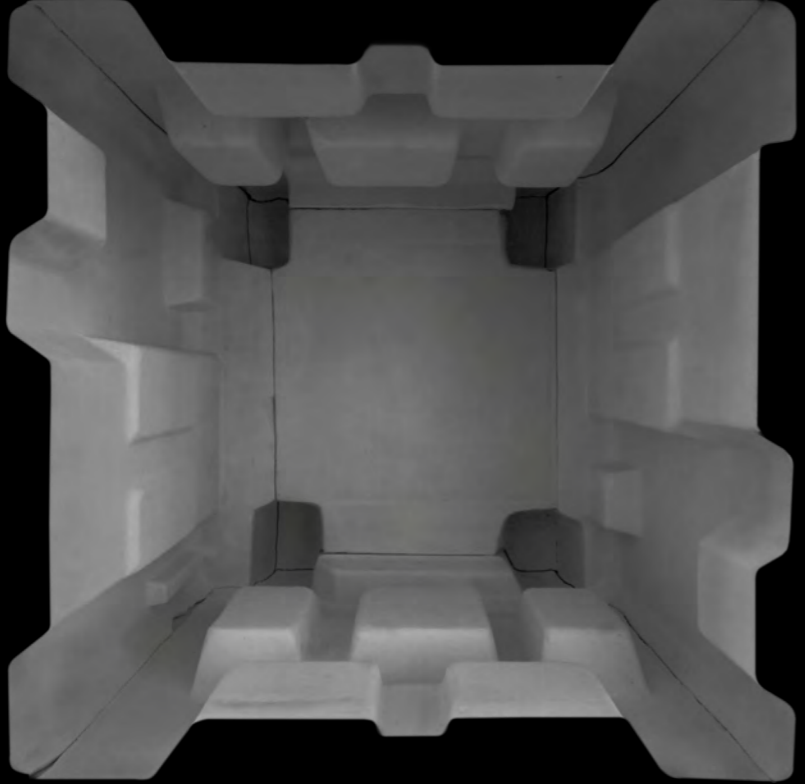
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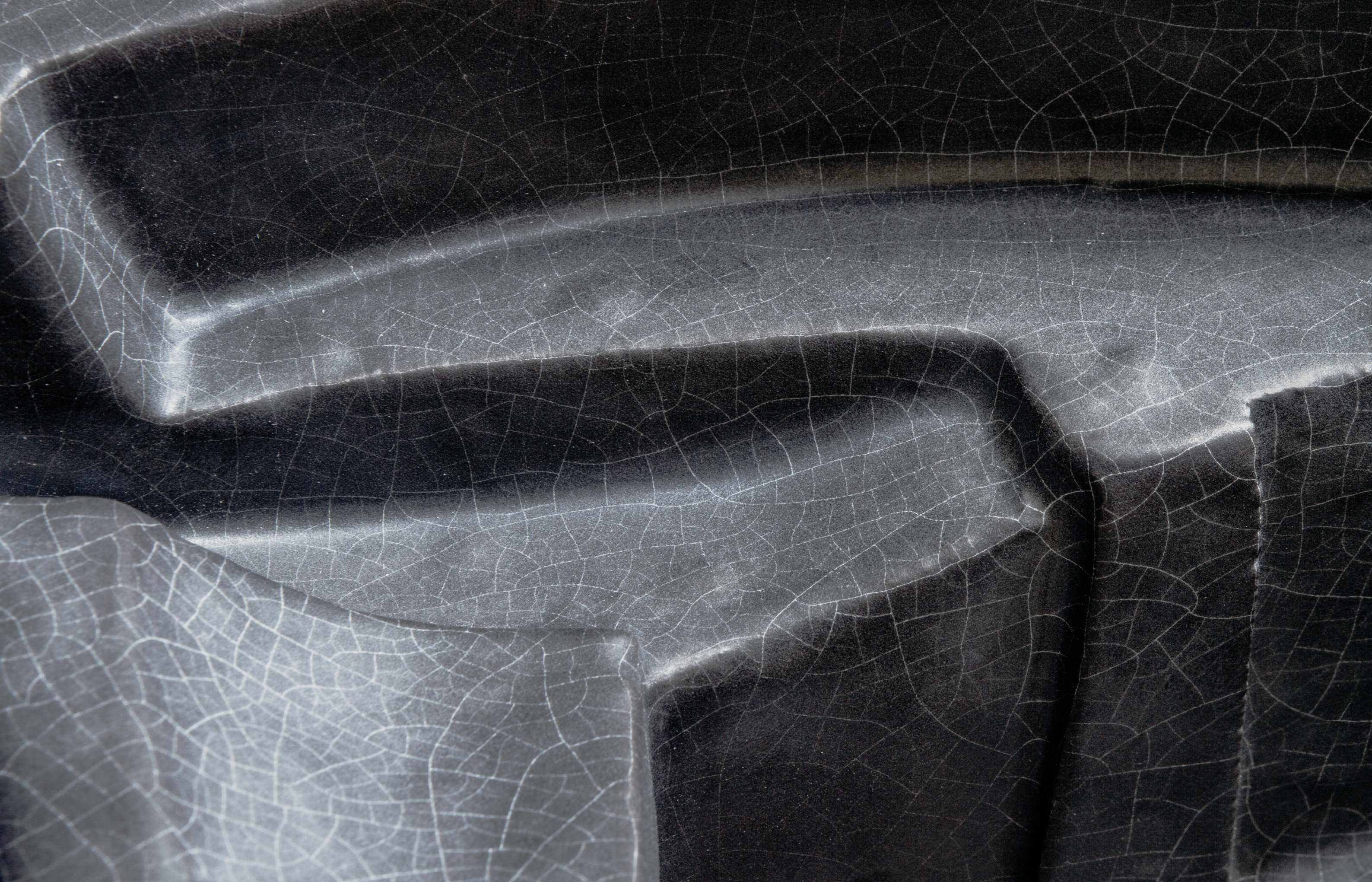


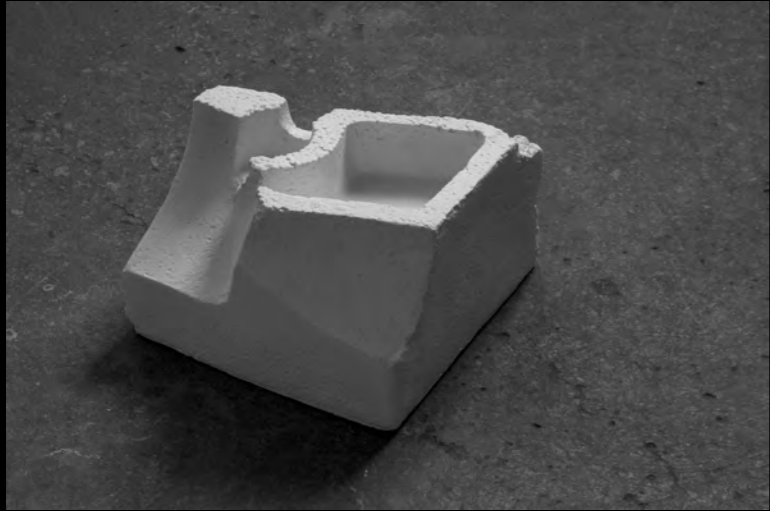


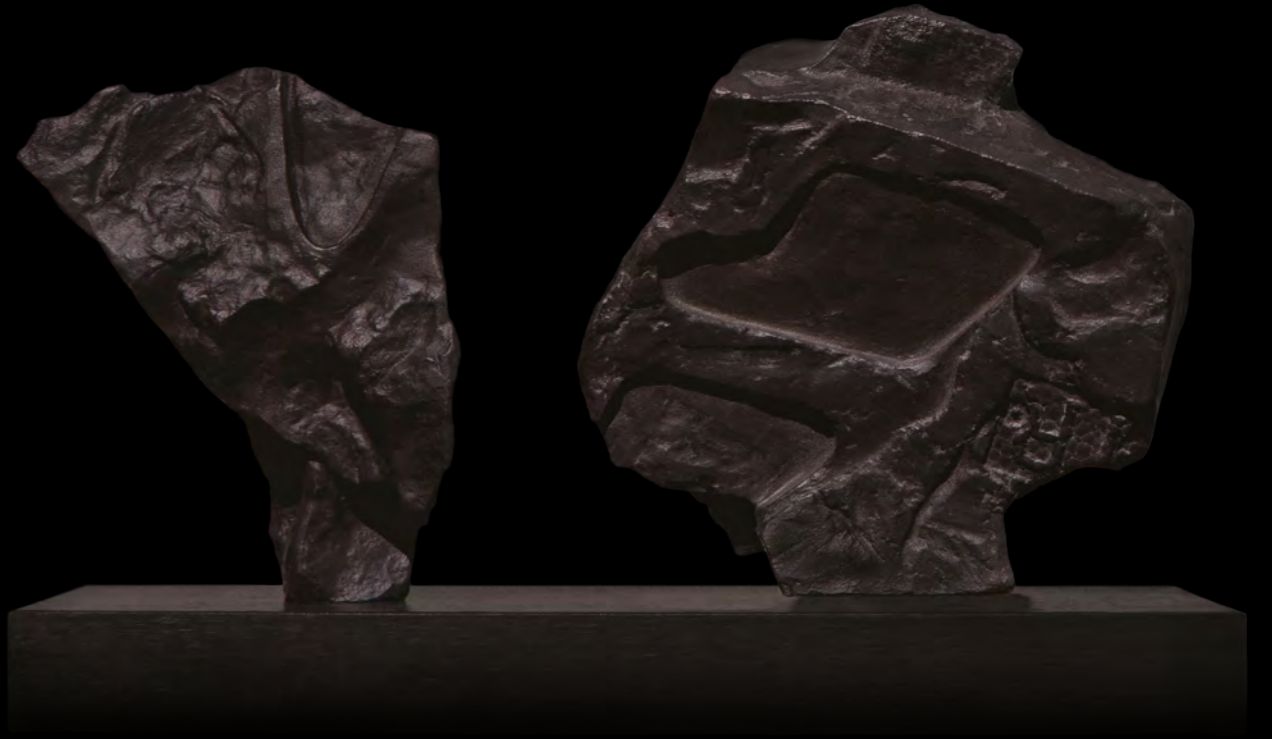






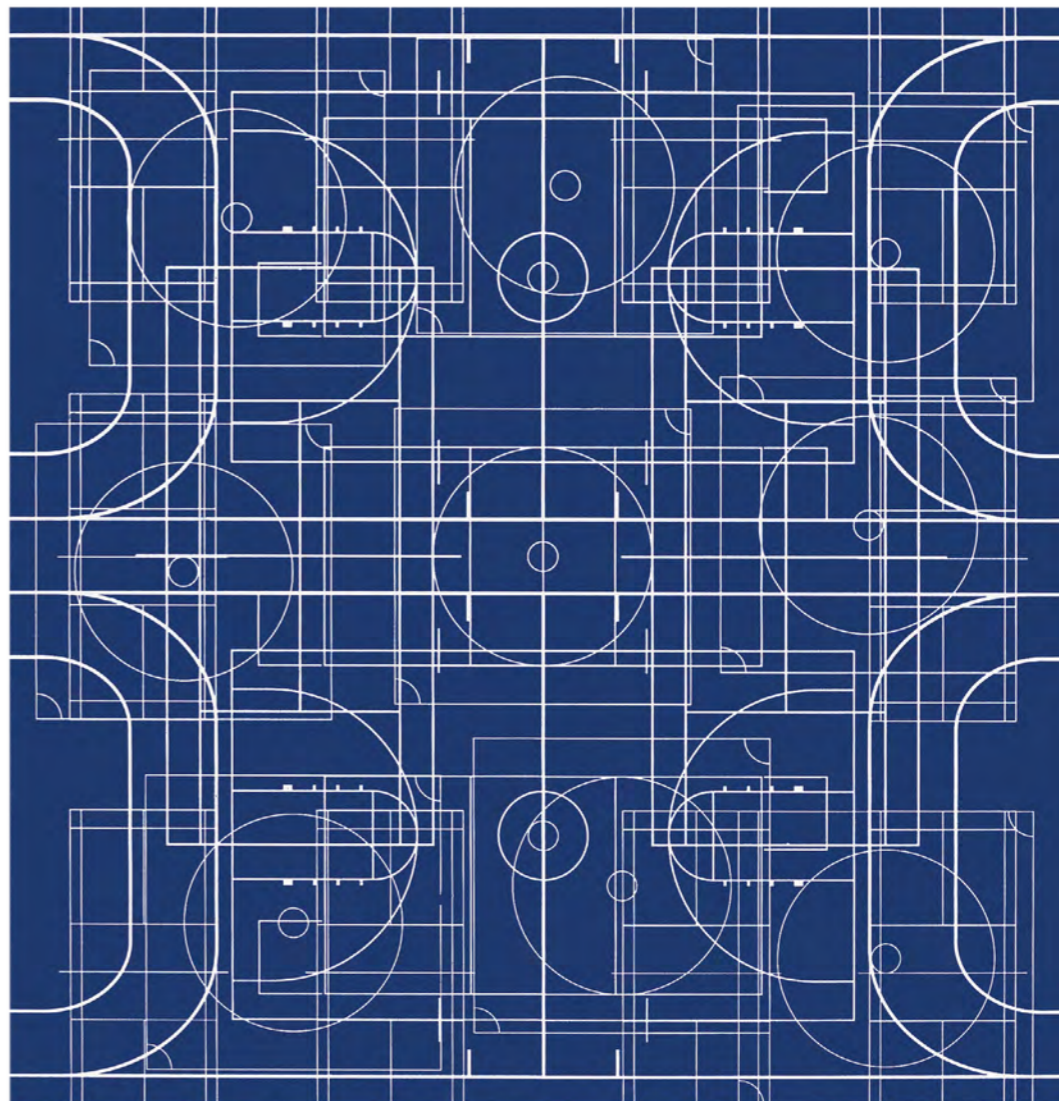


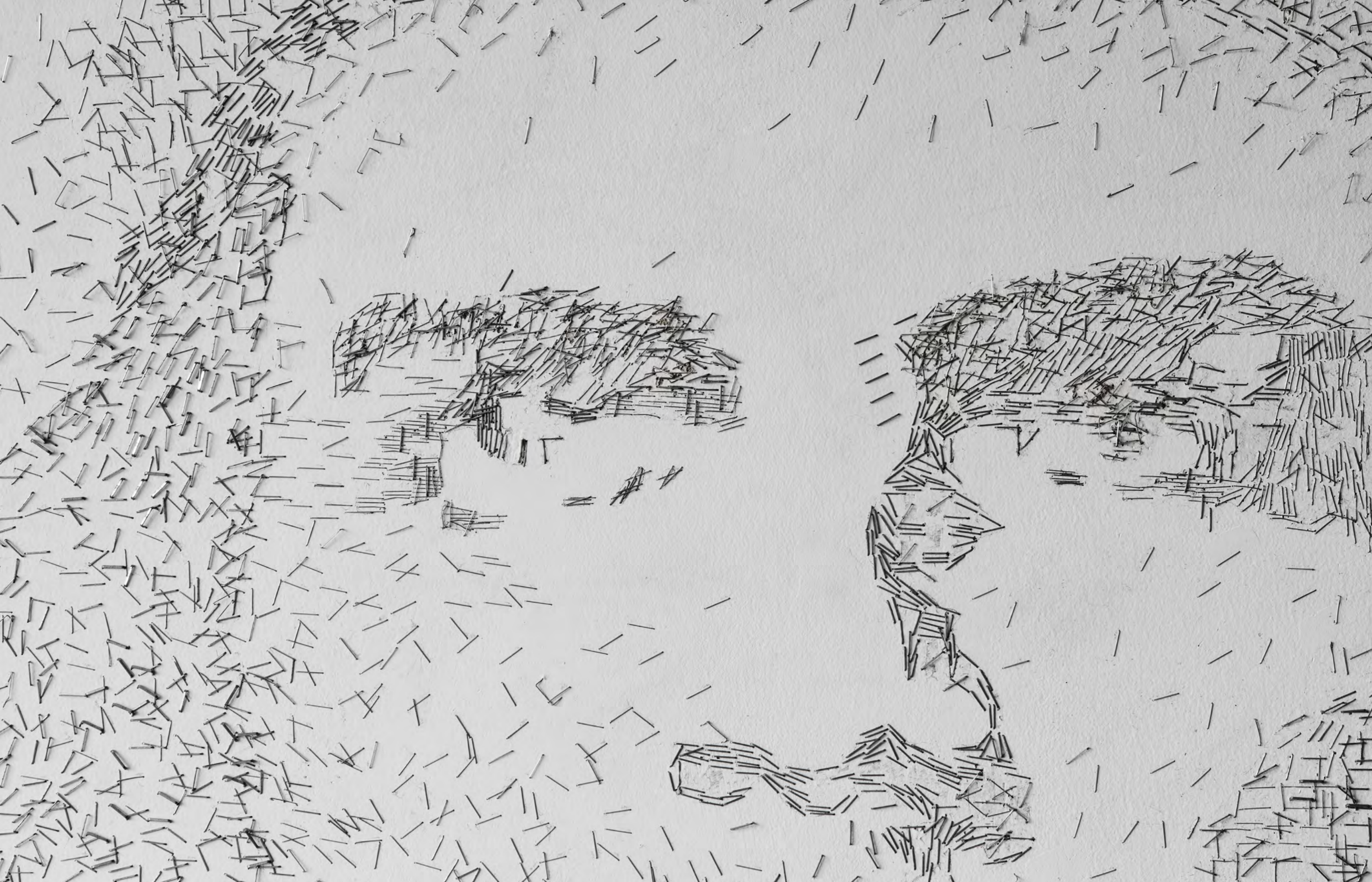








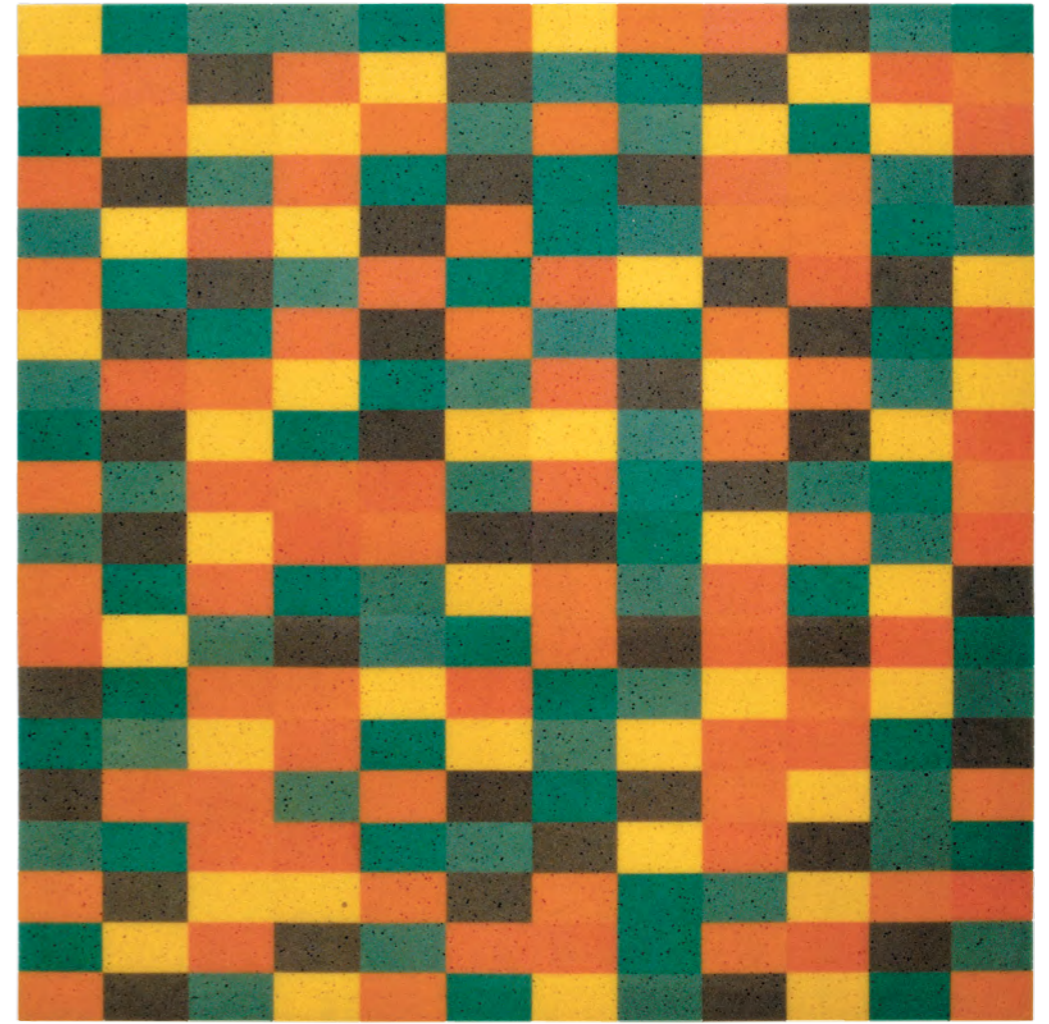




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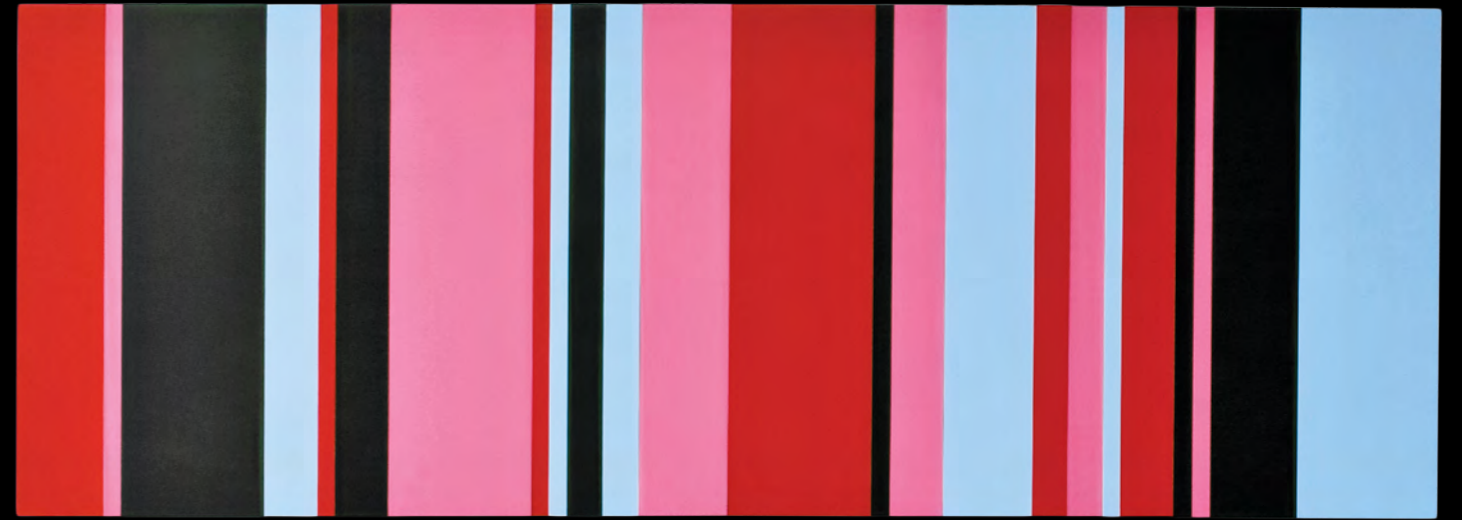




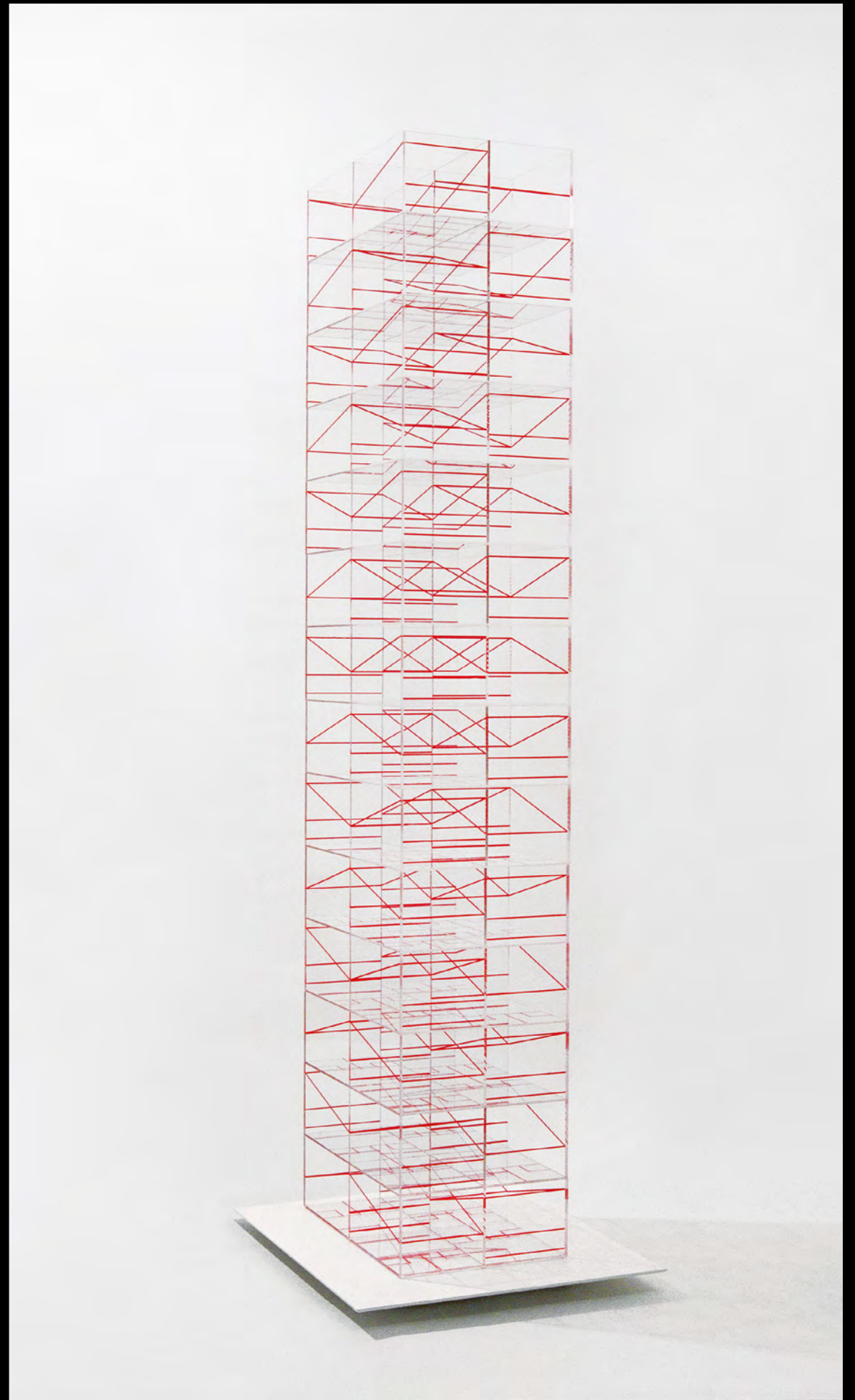
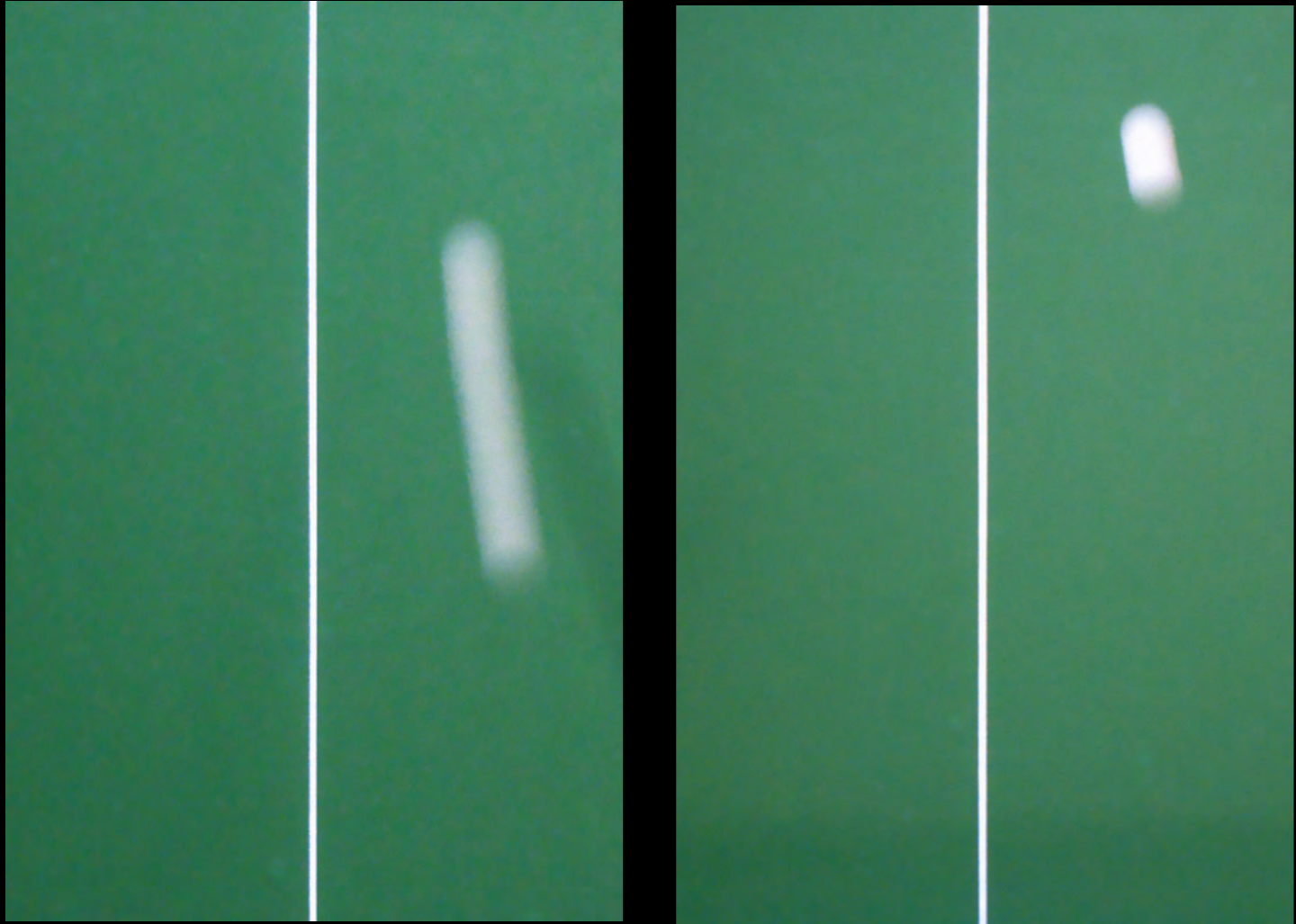
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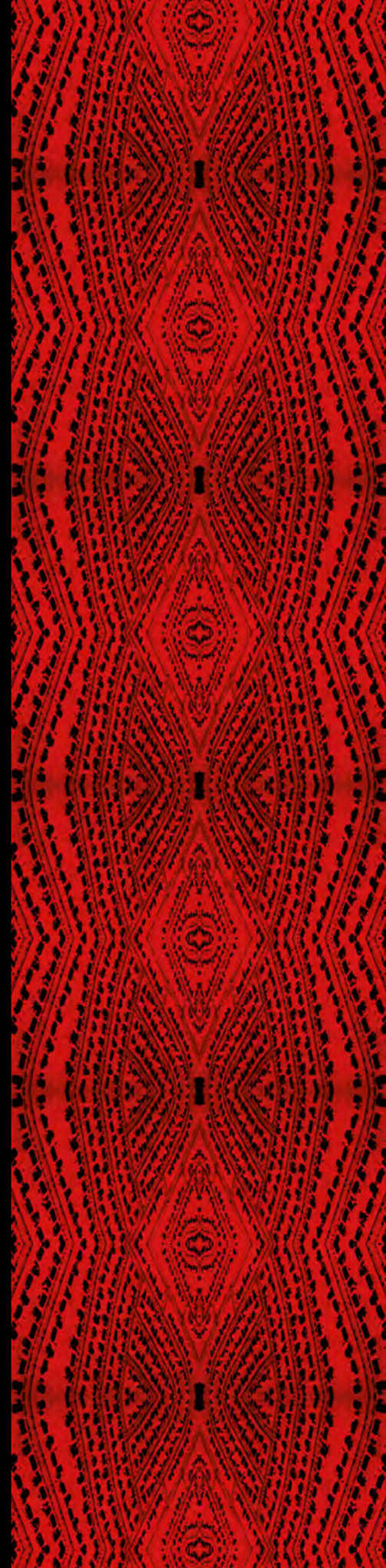
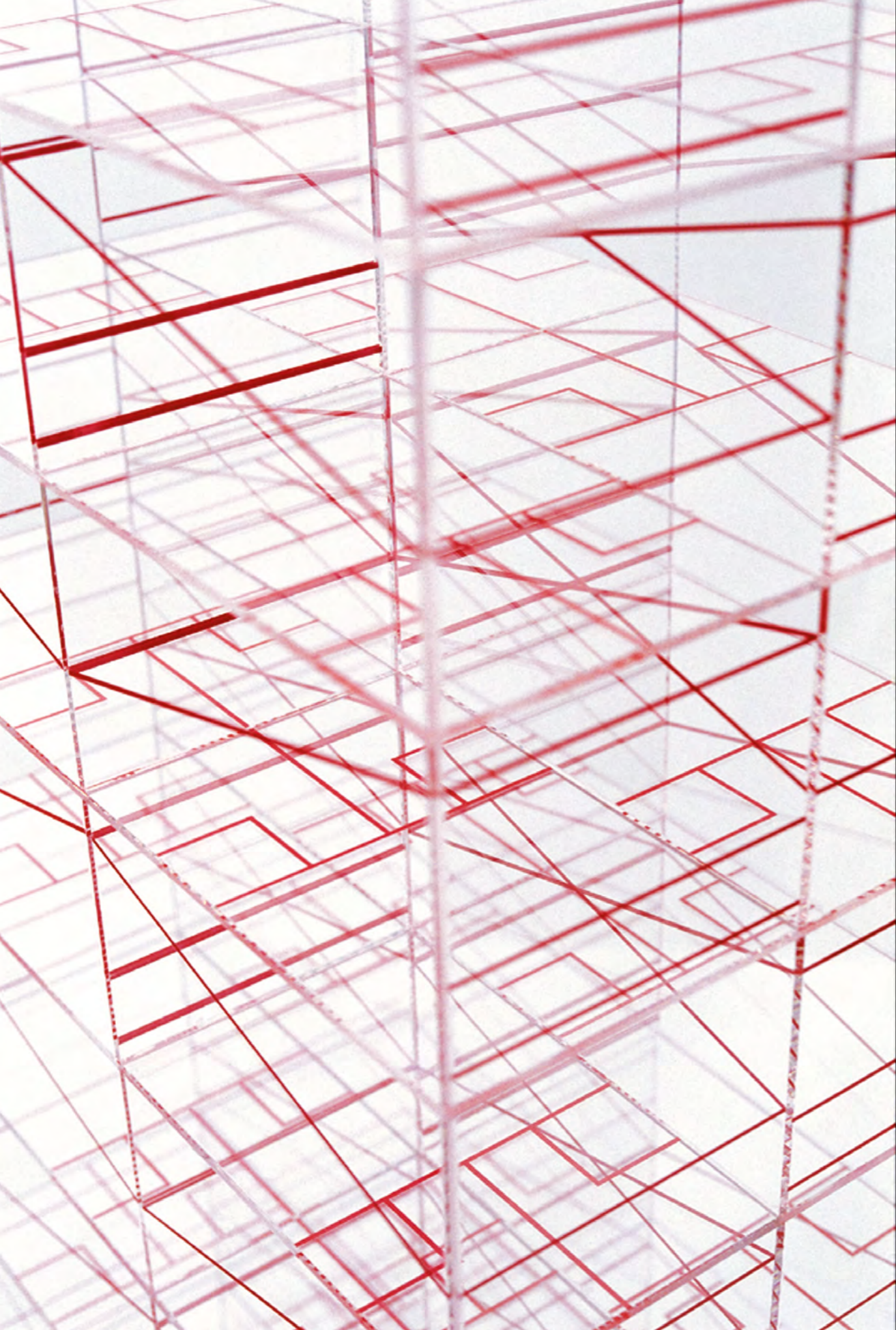
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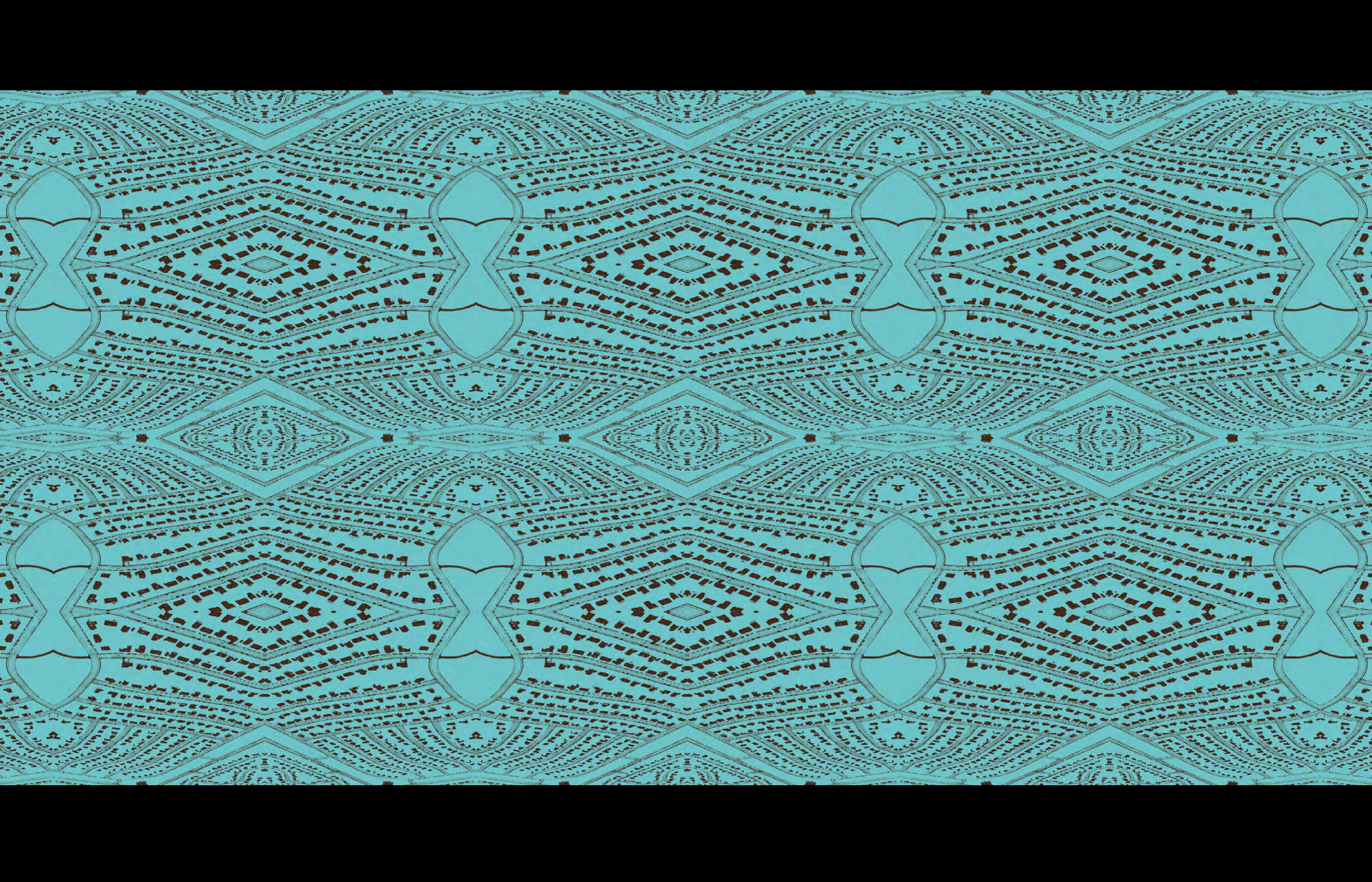


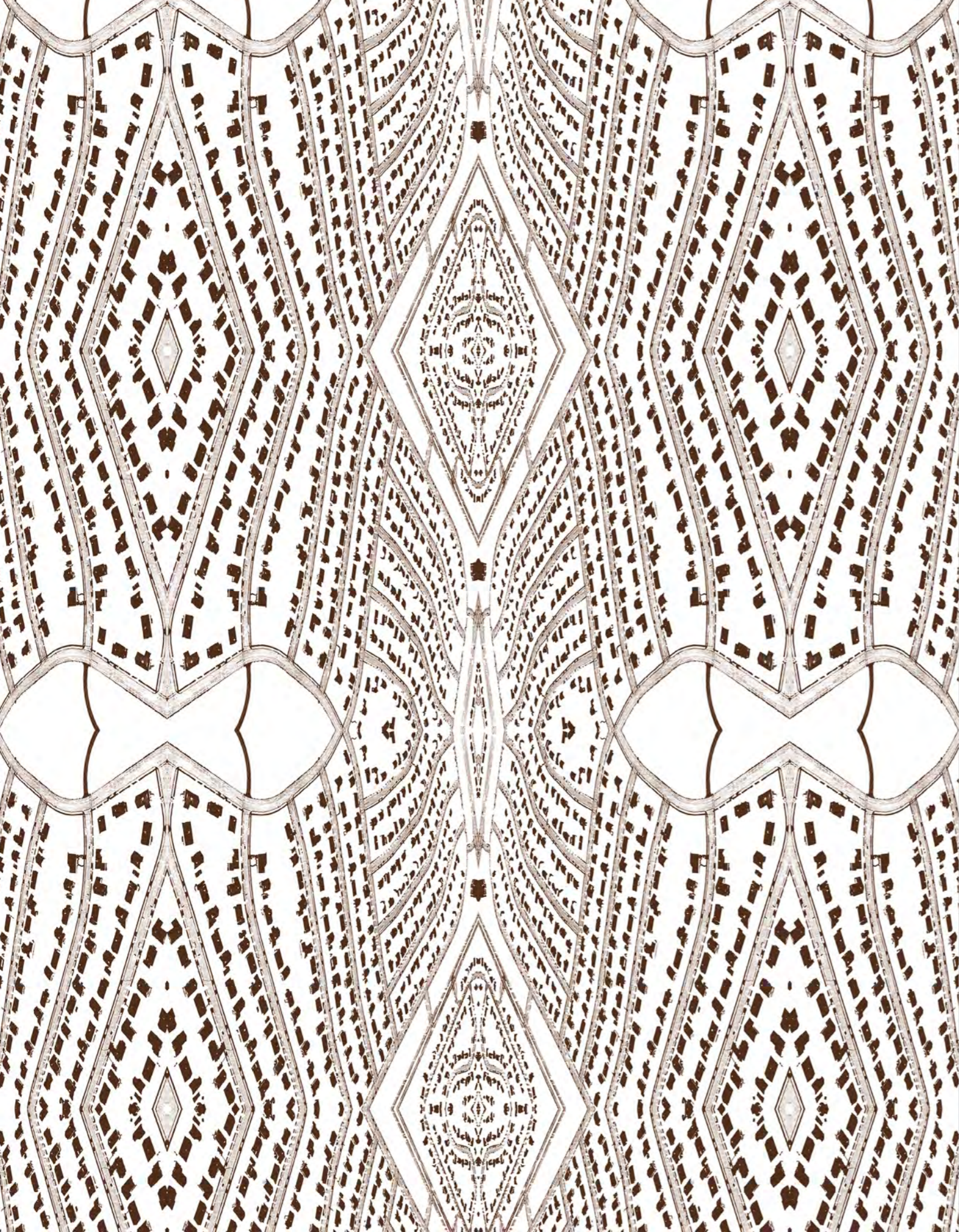




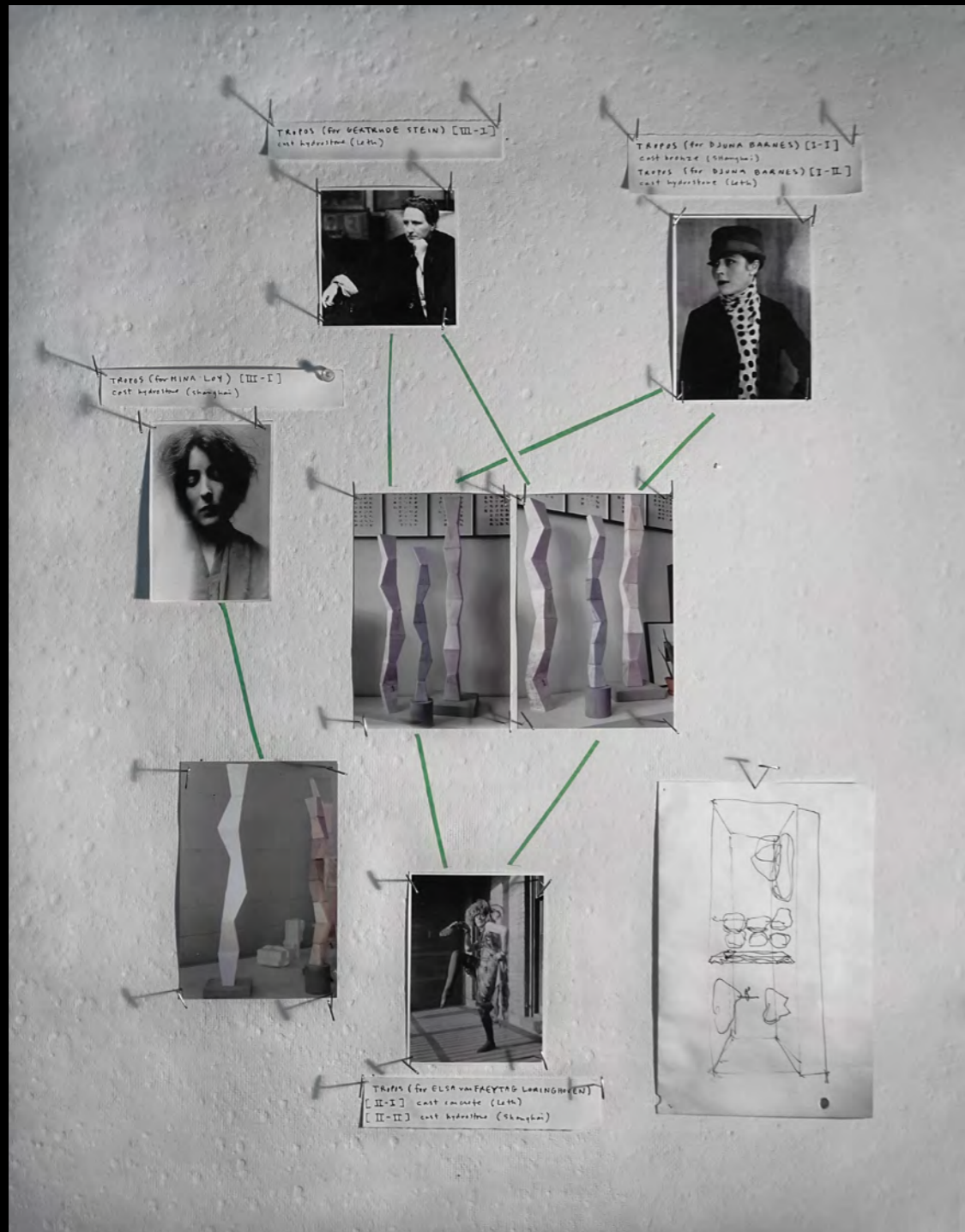




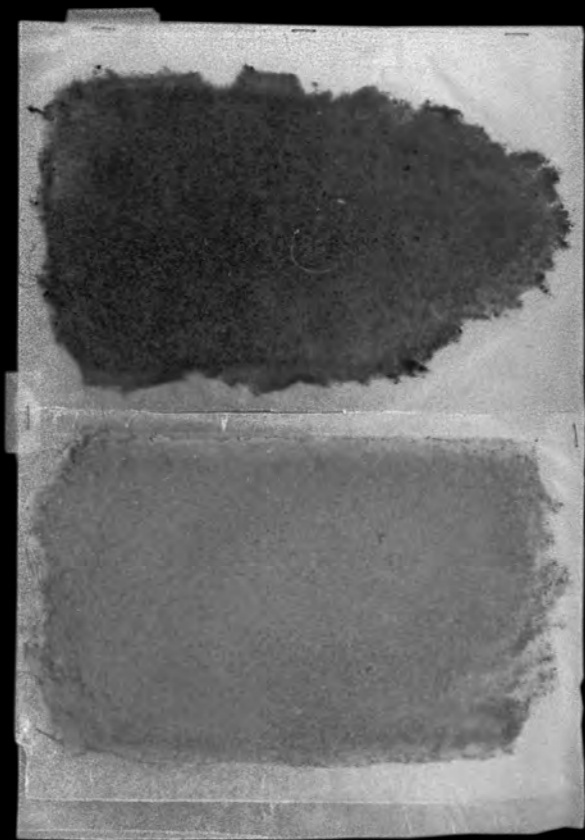


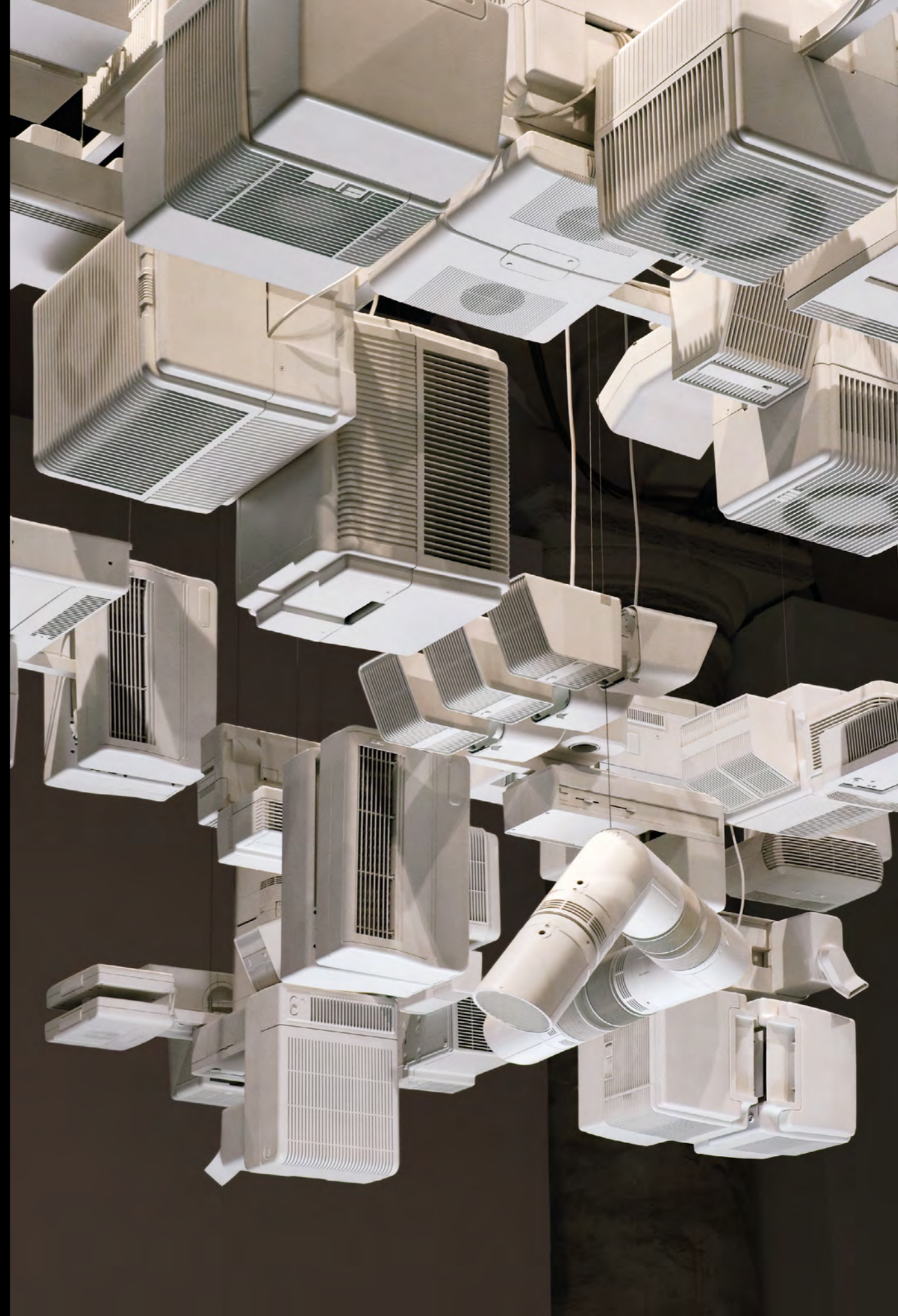


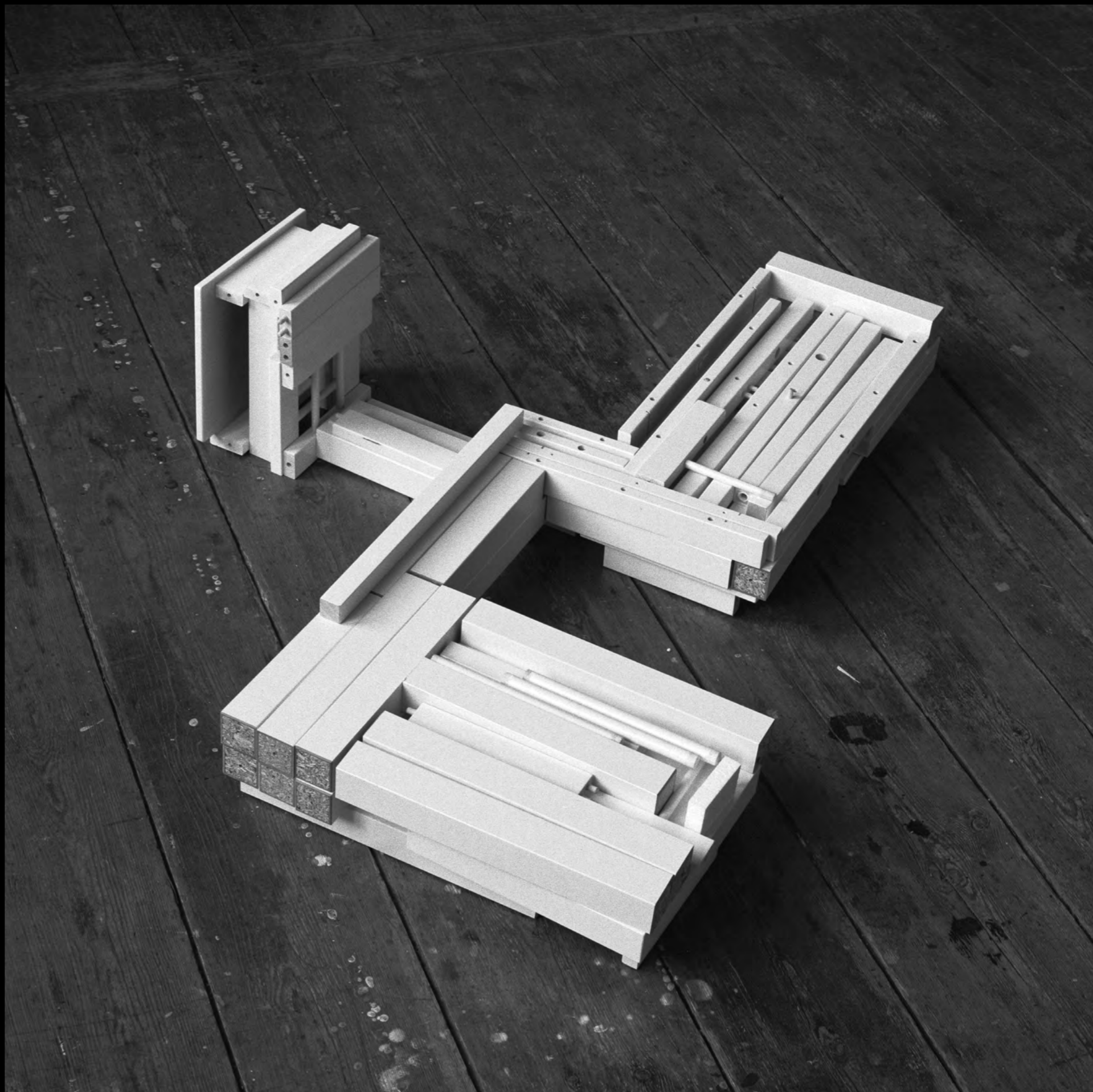


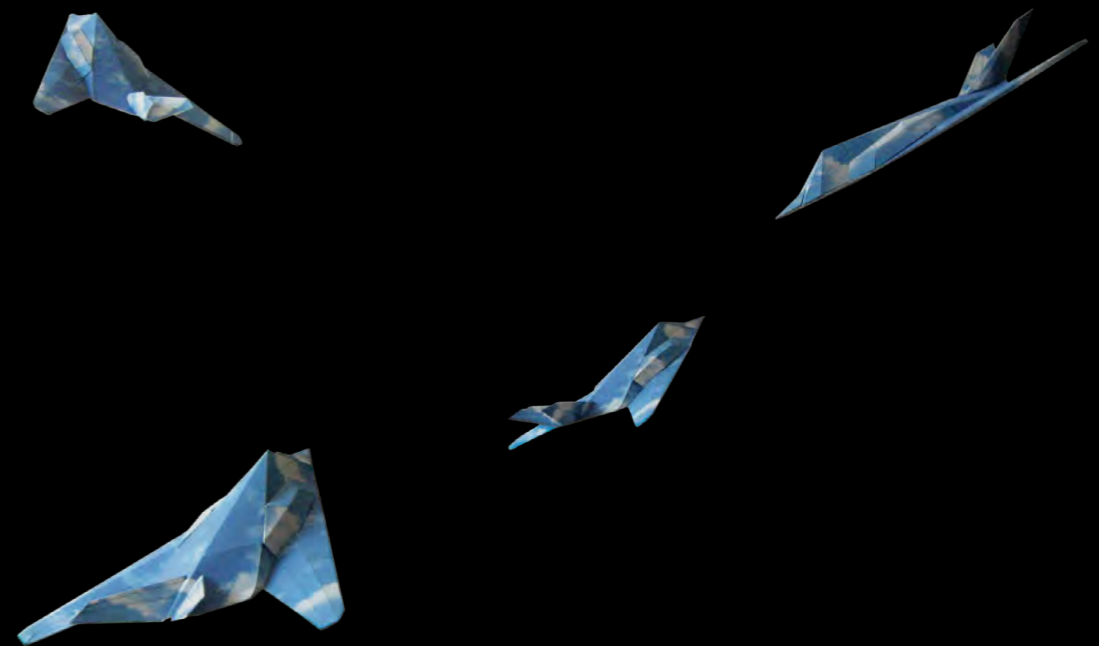


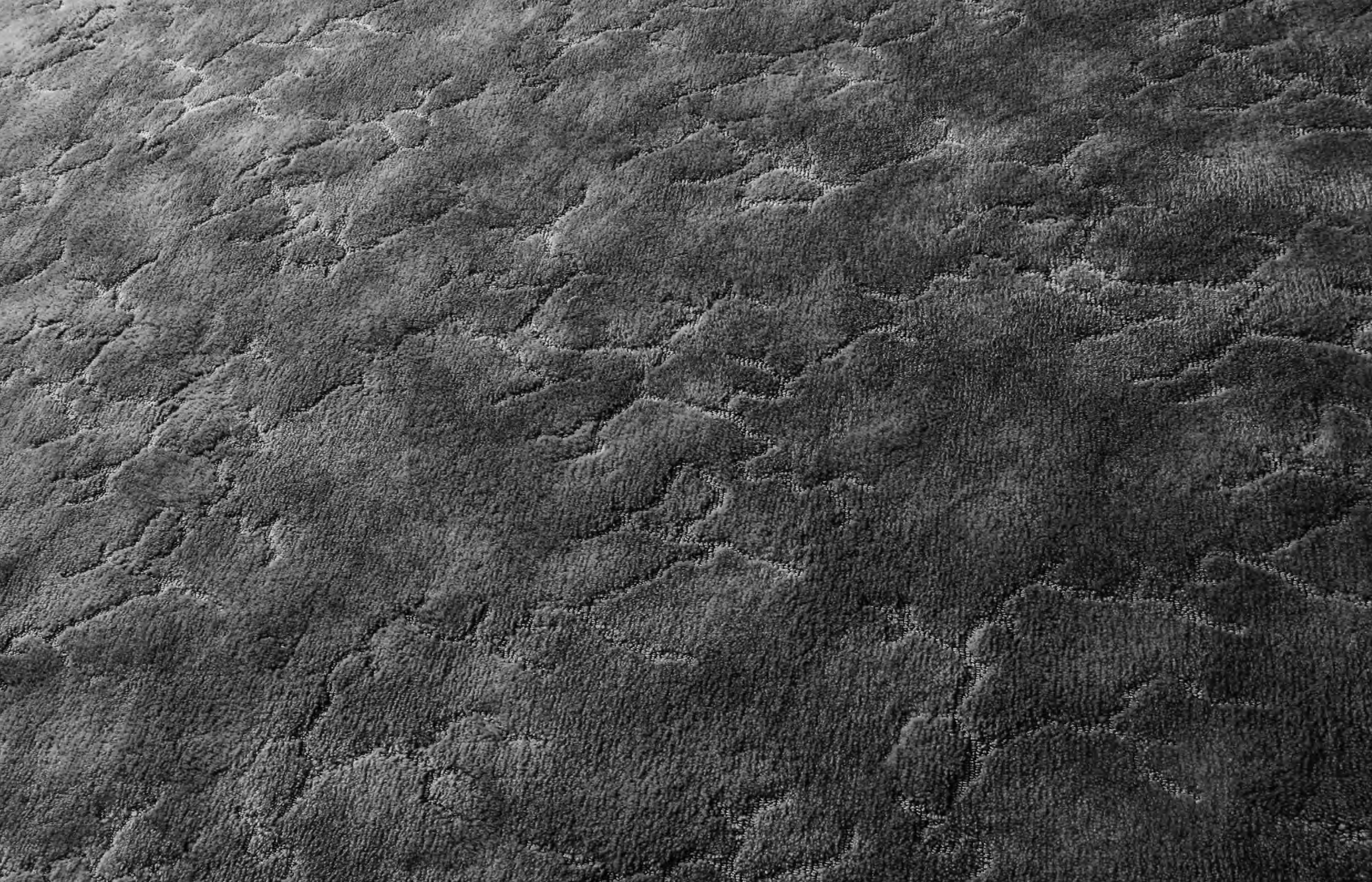










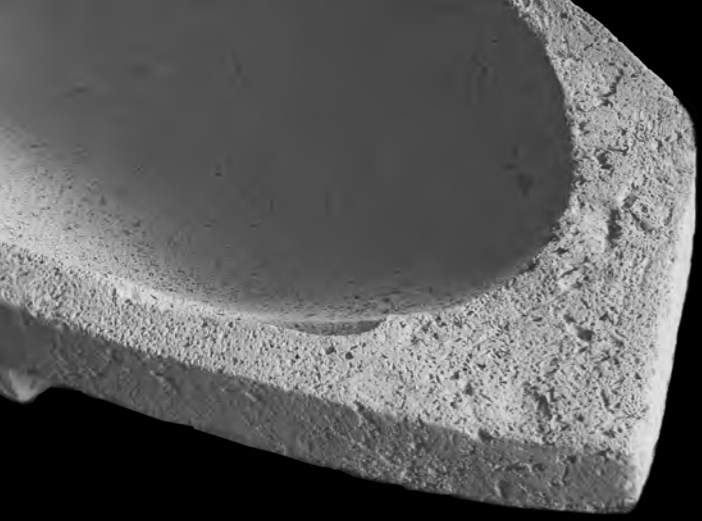
















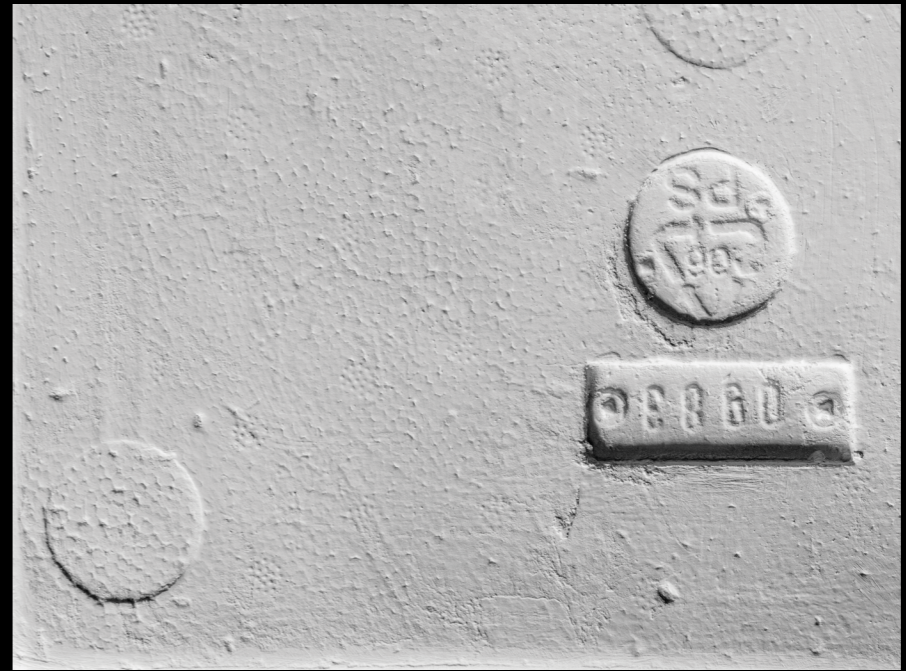
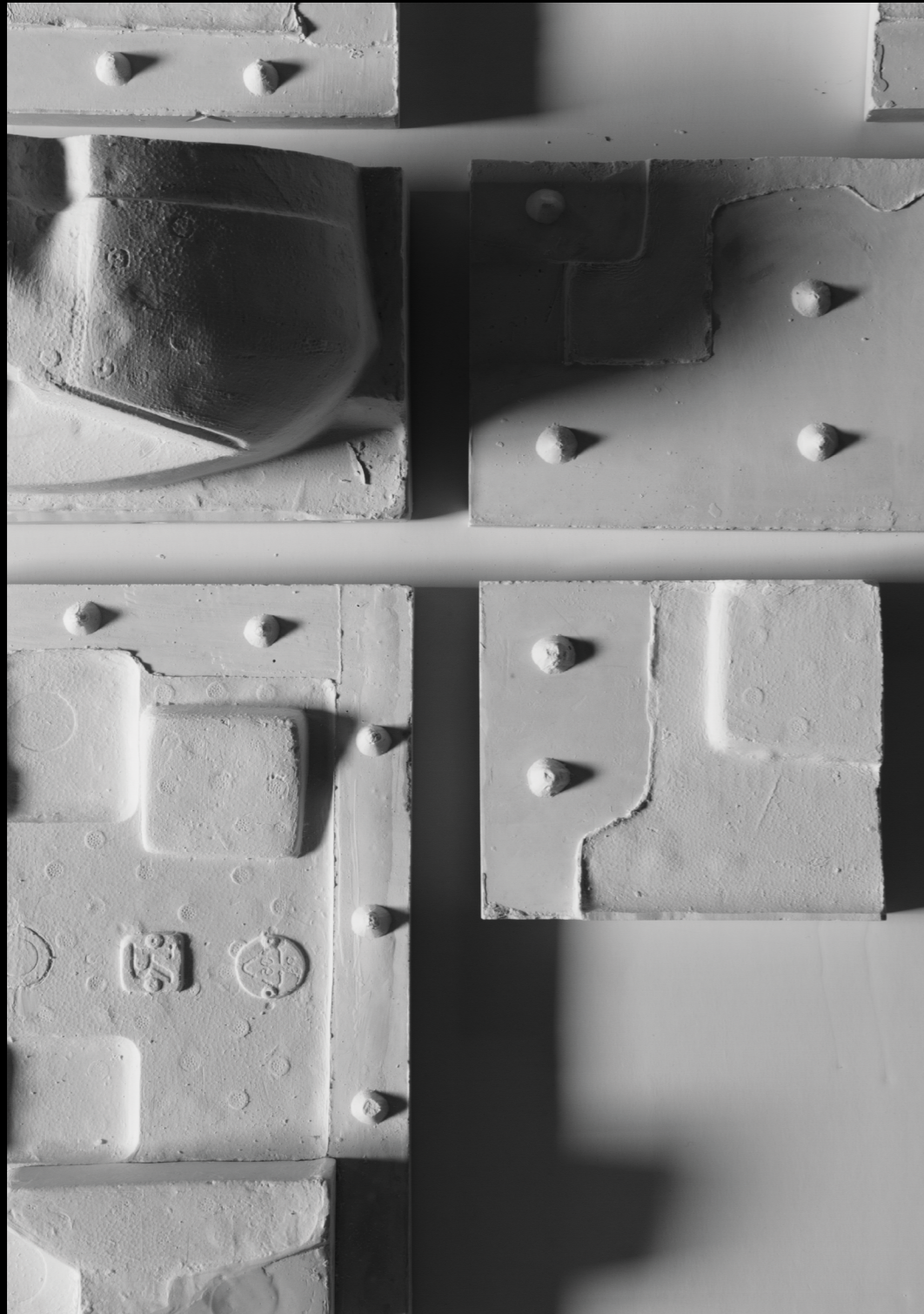


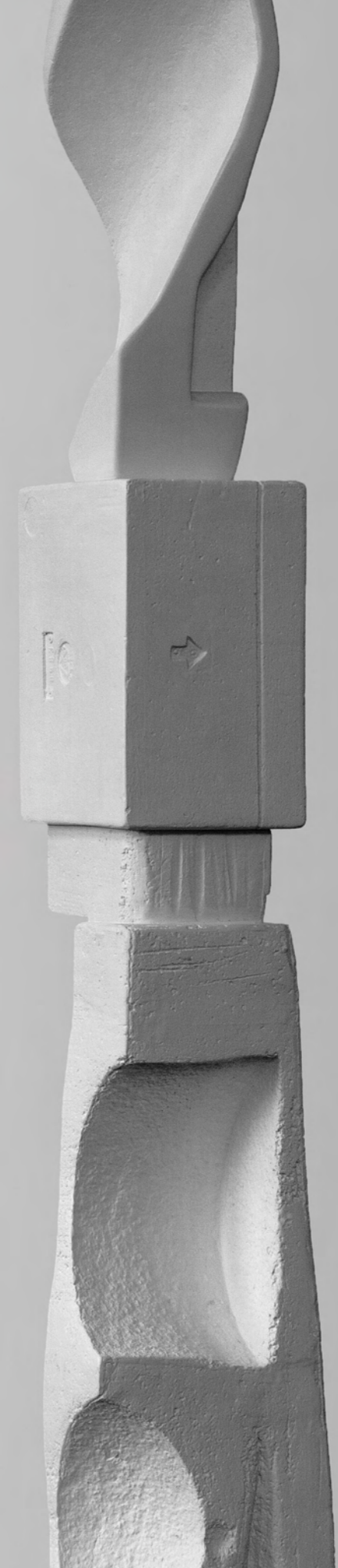




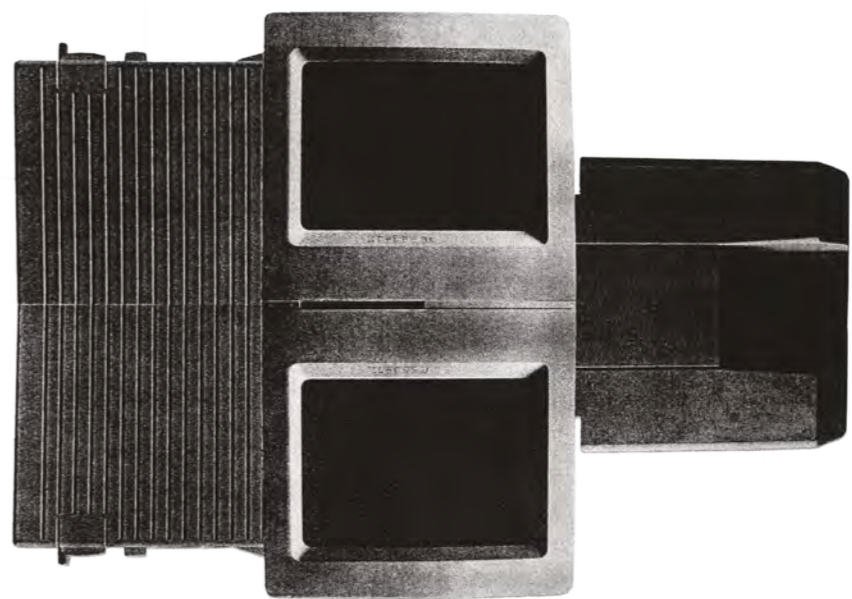


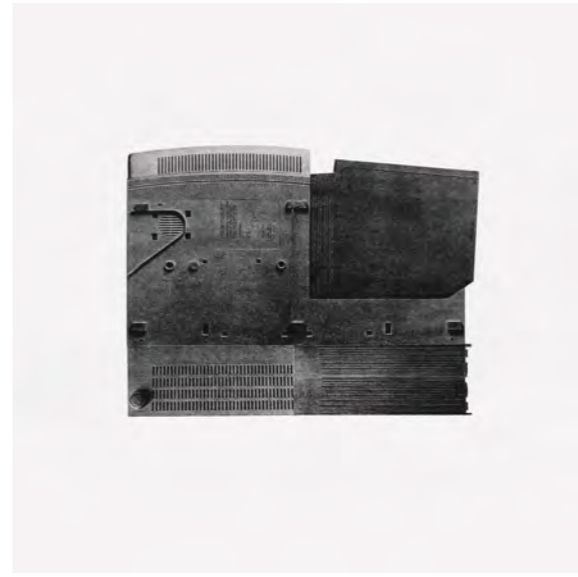
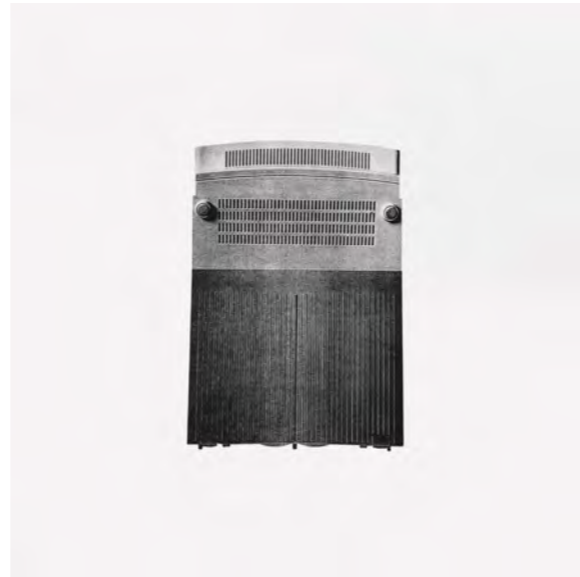
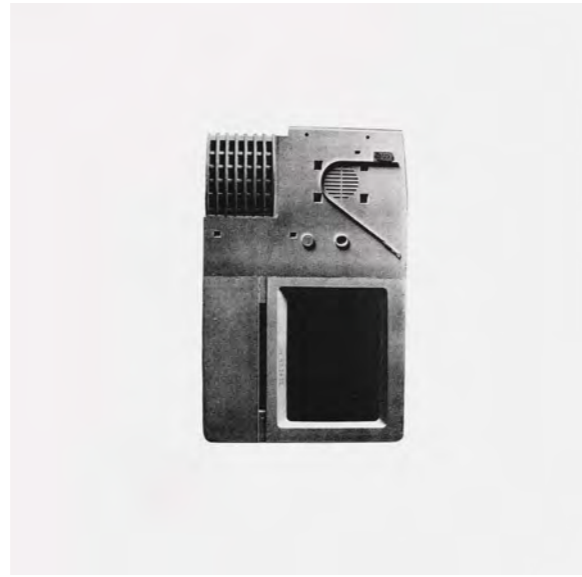
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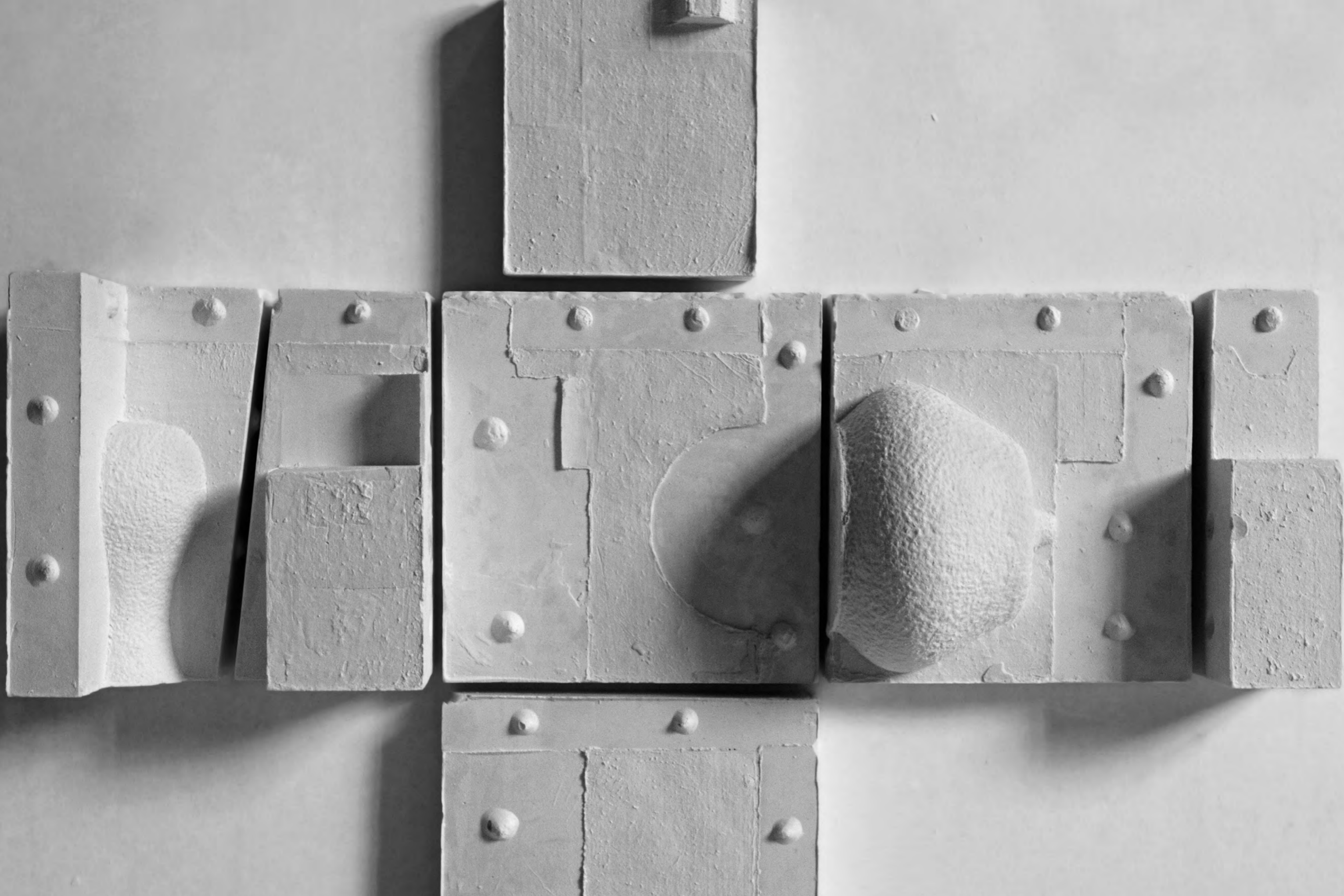
























AN TE LIU

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Andrew Berardini

AN TE LIU: OR, A VISION IN A DREAM, A FRAGMENT.



I watch An Te slicing long, irregular chunks out of leftover styrofoam with a hotwire cutter. Each shapely remnant holds a void, soft casings for hard products since extracted. They persist as curious fossils for technology's plastic exoskeletons. With each slice, the foam reveals some new unclassifiable shape, crafted by the hot stamp of a machine and the soft curve of an intuitive cut. The indentations and designs, logos, and manufacturer codes mark their pebbly white skins. Each fragment is strangely angled, and when re-combined by An Te they look all the stranger. Alien fetishes and relics of a disappeared civilisation, their original products long obsolesced, abandoned, and forgotten. Now an uncanny magic emanates from their lost origins and secret geometries.

On An Te's desk lies a picture of Giacometti's *Woman with Her Throat Cut* from 1932. It is beautiful and disturbing. A Venus flytrap and a twisted scrap of metal, an ancient feminine force but also a crushed bug, a crashed satellite, a rare bird with its wings snapped. Some particular modern violence has been inflicted on this supine thing. Fractured but complete, you feel a body in this bronze abstraction.

An Te picks it up and talks about the work's masterful formal qualities. What he says is true, but it's difficult for either of us to say what makes it so beautiful. He turns back to the pile of foam blocks with their shapely vacancies and begins cutting again, trying to find in these petrochemical relics some meaning; to combine these shapes into a sculpture that captures the illusion of human time, the absurd comedy of progress, the tales

we tell to forfend the inevitable—a sculpture that if not carrying the heft of all this spiritual gravitas, at least buys us enough time to keep on searching.

Sitting on a plinth near the wall, a work in hydrostone reveals a void, a bulbous space marked with a cartoonish flower. An Te shows me the Hello Kitty humidifier that he cast it from. He used it until the appliance began to leak, an unhousetrained mechanical cat. An Te tosses it back into a pile of broken machines and it makes a sound when it hits the others, that soft and hollow clatter that only plastic against plastic can make.

...

A utopian dream. A fretful modernity.

Efficient, hygienic, geometric, a city of the future. The winding Medieval streets of sheep paths were demolished in the old capitals for broad thoroughfares which cut crisply between crystal towers. The emperor built the boulevards for aesthetics but also to better suppress uprisings. Later, the huge swathes of open parkland envisioned by the modern architect for his model city were not expanses of bracing nature, but wastelands, exposed and unfriendly, intended only to complement the inhuman scale of monumental buildings.

Modernity moved from a people's promise to a means of control. Cleanliness became clean lines and the hard glass of corporate obelisks, reflective but never transparent,

colonised downtowns like spaceships in the name of finance, their needle spires lancing a bruised and smoggy sky. Miniature pods, almost replicas of the towers, invaded every home, the brushed chrome of refrigerators and the perfect, unbroken shells of laptops. Human labour disappeared into a perfect product, with all the promises of the future flickering on their retina screens.

Our computers, cast in spacey plastics and alloys with unbreakable glass screens and stuffed with hidden microprocessors appear uniform, stylish, clean. They sit on the bright veneers of semi-disposable Swedish furniture, compressed wood dust from unknown forests assembly-lined into repeatable shapes.

A perennial item on offer at IKEA, the modish cut-rate furniture emporium, is an inexpensive side table not ironically called a Lack.

...

An Te and I stand in his studio staring at the wall. We are surrounded by stacks of half built sculpture the colour of weathered bone. On the wall are all the images for this book, a survey of all he has accomplished, parallel and simultaneous, a frieze formed from 15 years of labour. I can see it all at once, but I can't help but focus on one point or another and trace a jagged throughline.

He tells me their stories. It begins after he left architectural practice. Cities and buildings, design and materials, all continued to fascinate him but art allowed a freedom, the possibility of loose play with materials and ideas independent of the dictates of clients, engineers, and inspectors.

An Te dissects a stack of multi-coloured Lack tables into an abstract wall work (*Dado*, 2006–2007). It is a painting maybe, with the glossy, gridded look of High Modernism but also the debasement of what came after. The mindless repetition of mass production remade into something meaningful, even beautiful, though without losing the hollow sadness of these cheap sticks of cheery design.

An Te patterns aerial views of suburban tract homes into silkscreened wallpaper (*Pattern Language: Levittown*, 1999–2007). He clusters household air purifiers so they resemble those sad industrial parks found near highways, lacking only the denatured cypress trees and brutally clipped hedges of their parking lots. He photographs late-90s computer components the colour of oatmeal, making photocollages that look like strange animals, with accordion bodies and bug-eyed screens (*Untitled Units I-VI*, 1999/2015).

In this panorama, I find an artist enthralled by the mechanisms of modernity, the alien landscape of twentieth and twenty-first century buildings, cities, and technologies; that which is practically obsolete as soon as it is made. An Te dissects and reassembles this history with a freedom and wry philosophical humour, Frankensteining its products and plans into artworks.

...

For the cities of the future, we dreamed of cleanliness and access, but those dreams lacked mystery. Buildings stripped to their most functional were oppressive and thus happily employed by the oppressors. The elegant disappearance of the human hand and its hidden labour in their flawless design only made it easier to disappear the humans who made them.

For all their imagination, our makers reflected the new tang of industry in their work, and in their hubris could not imagine their utopias failing. Or worse, their designs rejected intimacy, privacy, and expression, pretending to an impossible objectivity within which humans no longer belonged.

Bringing in the light, they left us without the comfort of shadows. Sanitising the cities, they made bodies into stains.

Donald Judd boxed unhandled planks of plywood and casts of concrete without any seeming reflection on the origins and repercussions of these materials, removing the environmental impacts as well as any perceptible human touch. By sucking away the affect, he sucked away the humanity.

I'm always pleased to see graffiti along an unbroken slab of concrete. I love the plants that crack through the grey expanses. Every time I see a perfect John McCracken plank, I long to smear my greasy thumb across its pristine surface, if only to return life to these inhuman things.

Le Corbusier famously thought that people in the streets ruined the look of his buildings. He thought we should abandon his perfect roads wholly to cars.

Utopia, unsurprisingly, has a cost.

An Te's *BLAST*, 2011, is a sculptural explosion of broken and outmoded appliances. Named after the journal of the Vorticist movement, the explosion also alludes to the final scene in Michelangelo Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point*, 1970, where a bourgeois mansion gets blown up and its contents fly across the sky in slow motion. The domestic artefacts that make up *BLAST* all date from the past 15 years. Modernism's sterility literally burst



I

In our mission for better, faster, cleaner, we bleached out the very things that make us human, our sloshing liquids and animal stink, the irrationality of our desires and inefficiency of spiritual fulfillment. A system reduces everything to components within that system. Rationality has its charms, but it is a hammer that makes everything look like a nail.

apart. Formally opposed but thematically aligned, An Te's *White Dwarf*, 2012, puzzles together a sprawling, ragtag collection of dormant machines into a sphere suspended in mid-air. Lifeless and deathless, its name an astronomical designation for a particular kind of dying star, this intricate assembly of consumer electronics exudes a Kafkaesque awe and dread, a Death Star's charm in compact form.

Like the minimalists, An Tè makes work out of the material of modernity. Unlike them, he resists submitting to modernity's lack of intimacy or its authoritarian power. Instead of presuming to critique its failures, he looks to find within it agency and emotion, to reassemble and renew its meaning. Each new sculpture navigates a way further through.

...

The twentieth century was the triumph of the invisible, empirically quantifiable but unseen with the naked eye. Permeated by radio and television waves, bodies crawled with germs just discovered, wearing creams and unguents, shoes and clothes that advertising lent a spectral aura. I do not need to know the science of cellular telephony to understand that I hold a culmination of the history of my species in my hand, and that it is paid for by ads. We replaced the invisible forces of religion with the invisible hand of the market, the microscopic germ, and the ethereal data cloud. The fear of God weakened, power needed a new way to control our behaviour.

Responding to all this, the conceptualists were interested in the invisible, in grids and networks, those forces that permeate and animate with only ideas, the microscopic, or the electromagnetic. Robert Barry in the late 60s and early 70s made artworks out of radio signals, the transmission itself being the content, rather than any information it might carry. He buried a small piece of barium 133 in New York's Central Park, the artwork consisting of its rate of decay (estimated to be ten years). In another work, he released krypton, xenon, argon and helium into the California air. Have I inhaled a molecule of Barry's artwork?

When An Tè ionises and sanitises every cubic inch of airspace in a gallery with giant towers of HEPA purifiers (*Exchange*, 2001), it does not surprise me that the room feels inhuman, scentless and unnatural. In *Matter*, 2008, he captures tiny airborne dust motes with a surveillance camera and relays the footage to two large-scale projections—one in real time and the other playing at half speed, and thus falling further and further into history. In these recordings the particulates form cosmic vistas of strange beauty.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry wrote in *The Little Prince*, 1943, "What is essential is invisible to the eye." Dark matter, according to many physicists, makes up two-thirds of the weight of the universe. We can't detect it at all except by the force it exerts on the matter we can measure around it.

We can only know long-extinct animals by the space they make encased in ancient stone.

Some easily spot the demise of our species in the trajectory of our behaviour, the end written into the waste of our action, the evidence of our detritus.

Any visionary can tell you, it's hard to see what isn't there.

...

Polystyrene will last a million years. It doesn't biodegrade at all as far as anyone can tell. Long after the last book has flaked and blown away, the last city crumbled into dust, all that'll remain will be time and Styrofoam, a colloquial term for polystyrene but also a proprietary word owned by the chemical giant Dupont.

If some sentience explores our planet long after humans have obliterated themselves, they will have the remnants of our cheap consumer electronics to intuit our customs and beliefs, our gods and monsters. Looking at the voids in these foam casings, they will try to fill them with ideas, with contexts, deciphering our entire civilisation through these by-products that refuse to die.

It would not be entirely inaccurate, for those future archaeologists will judge us mostly on our gadgets and our trash. Do we worship our technology? Maybe. That word doesn't capture the nuance—dependence crackles with accuracy, devotion feels the most true. Our inventions feel miraculous at first, less so with each plastic continent swirling on the surface of the rising ocean.

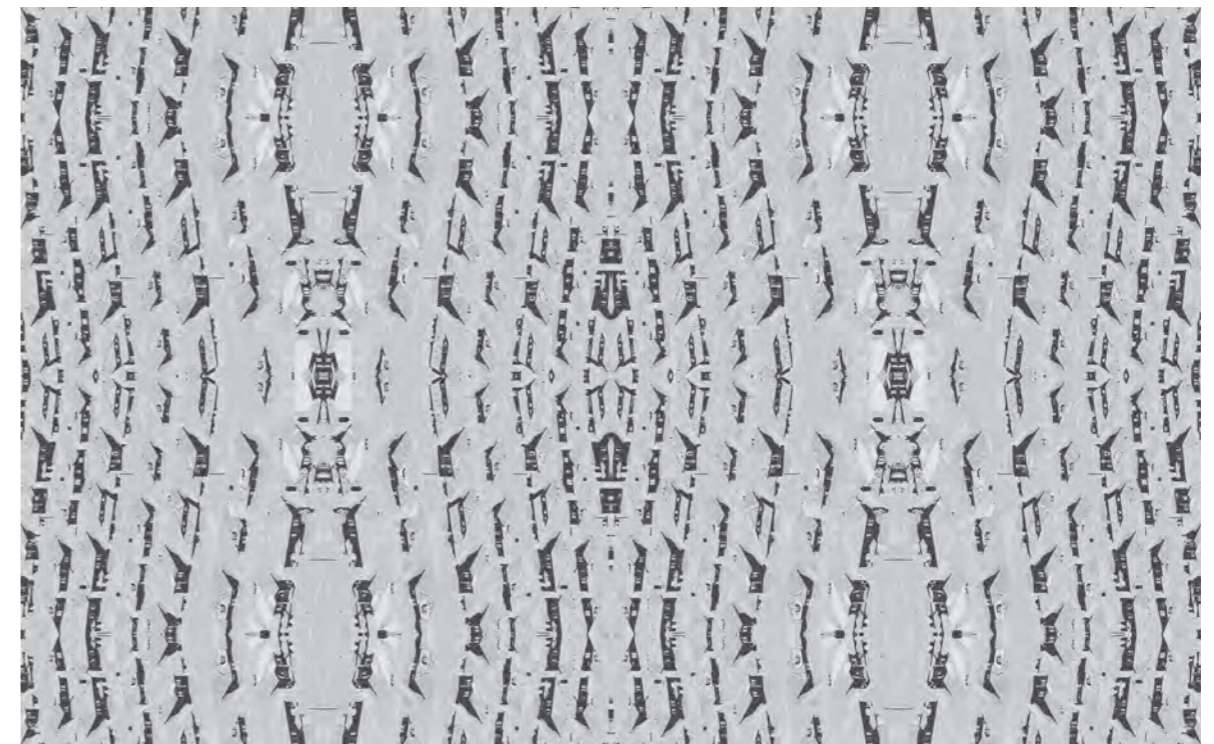
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The sweeping efficiency of buildings is a manifestation of the sweeping efficiency of machines. This mechanisation

forces lives and homes to conform to a certain order: making the most, the cheapest, the fastest. These houses are no better than pieces from a Monopoly board, quickly erected and then wiped away to make room for hotels. They are empty plastic shapes, not homes where memories are made and lives are lived out. When An Tè was invited to make an artwork out of a suburban tract home before it was to be demolished for a much bigger development, he stripped the house down and painted it a perfect Monopoly green (*Title Deed*, 2009). He pried the house

tendrils of vines and the splayed bloom of spring flowers. Nature, now subdued by humans, had lost its pagan force, metamorphosing from divine entity to decoration. Humans, conquered by machines, move into domiciles cast into equally calming patterns. Commenting on the false equation of this domesticity, An Tè makes wallpaper from the serial configurations of suburban planning.

Humans are too messy, too fucked-up, too crazy, too emotional to survive these conditions for long. Ruptures



2

number off of its facade just prior to its erasure, and now it is the only remnant.

Patterns once cast get repeated, modified only to better manipulate needs and desires. A city emerges blocked out like a circuit board—houses repeated, strip malls repeated, office towers repeated. The reiterative patterns soothe on some level. In nineteenth century wallpaper, we employed

ensue, change occurs, the pattern is broken, disrupted, though never for long. I have seen cities devastated by the ethereal flow of numbers from bankers' algorithms. Block after block of abandoned single-family homes and ravaged apartments, concrete cracked with weeds, yards stripped of foliage, windows and doors unblinking under plywood boards. The only sign of humans in these ruins is the graffiti spray painted by those left behind. The colour

a last sign of life, the words a fading echo before either entropy or some official gets around to tearing them down.

...

One day, probably soon, the managers will preside over vast networks of mechanical slaves, their human workers replaced by artificial intelligences that require no sleep and eat only electricity. I imagine my descendants locked out of the crystal city, meandering through fields, building



3

huts and expressing dreams out of the leftovers of the old civilisation, conjuring Zen sculpture gardens, assembling rusted scrap metal into idols of imagined monsters and distant deities.

In this new wilderness, I don't imagine them unhappy.

In his novel *Brave New World* (1932), Aldous Huxley imagined a dystopia controlled by the sinister cleanliness of modernity and a "Savage Reservation" subject to the brutal freedom of the wilderness. In revisiting the novel 30 years later, he wished he had carved a space out for those who opted out of the cheery authoritarianism but also found some protection from the indifferent forces of nature; those who used technology without it using them in a decentralised and egalitarian society.

Sounds rather utopian.

...

When An Te casts ceramics and bronzes from foam and plastic, he brings together, with the human hand, materials resistant to the erosions of time, finding enduring presence in form.

With his bone white stacks and clusters of machines, the modernism of technological change unites with the modernism of aesthetic form, capturing the beauty and failings of our civilisation. In this there is a dollop of sly humour and another of unlikely hope.

What should we do with the scrapheap of things and ideas that came before?

Make something new. Perhaps even make it new in an old way.

There are reasons that artists, including An Te, are returning to ceramics. Inundated by the manufactured products around us, we long to make things ourselves again, to connect again with materials. He does so without denying the profound effects modernity has had on humans and human expression. The materials bear their histories, and they also create a new one. There is no denial of change, but neither is there a capitulation to its forces.

In the ruins of Modernism, exemplified by trash that never disappears, a permanent rune of ruinous ways, An Te makes something new. Almost like funereal statuary, melancholic attempts at memorial in monument. And in

a way they are. Styrofoam in a million years might be our species' only memorial. There is beauty, pathos, and poetry in crafting polystyrene in the guise of classical objects, referencing high moments of antiquity and modernism, collapsing the two into a single thing, one that possesses its own particular beauty in the tension between the treasured and the trashed.

...

The subtitle of this essay comes from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's opium dream poem, "Kubla Khan", written in 1797 but left famously unfinished, until it was published as is in 1816 at the urging of Lord Byron.

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree...

I liked that the name, An Te Liu, had a matched syllabic half-rhyme to Xanadu, and that so much of his work is about a particular utopia attempted and failed, a subject shared with Coleridge's most famous poem.

The great Khan's empire has long collapsed along with his pleasure dome. Standing in the fragments of a passing civilisation, T.S. Eliot tried to piece together a eulogy for a lost world of spirituality and culture. The last line of this essay comes from *The Waste Land*, 1922.

Here we stand, the world literally sinking into the ocean, yet, there is still some hope, still a chance for us to take the materials and monsters birthed by scientists and technocrats and recover something meaningful. Something as ghostly as An Te's sculpture, an epitaph for what was, and a prologue for what's to come.

We can do as Eliot wrote almost a century ago:

These fragments I have shored against my ruins.

FIGURES

1. *BLAST* 2011 (detail).
2. *Pattern Language: Tantric (gold)* 2002 (detail).
3. Numbers from 19 Leona Drive (*Title Deed* 2009).

Pablo Larios

AN TE LIU: HOUSING PROBLEMS



A recurring template in which Western philosophical and theoretical discourses have historically presented their own argumentation is by recourse to architecture, as a meta- or *arche-* modality for positing thought and correlating the ideal with the apprehension of the real. The medium and discourse of architecture, at once practical and theoretical, has historically been sufficiently capacious for a sustained and varied articulation of theoretical and expository relationships such as foundation (base) and superstructure. One could say that the building—at once tower and prison—of Western thought is comprised through and through by additional chambers, passageways, arcs and annexes: Pascal’s rooms, Baudelaire’s Romantic-decadent self as a “boudoir, filled with withered roses”, Heidegger’s “house of being”, Kant’s “architectonic”, Woolf’s “room of one’s own”, and Benjamin’s “arcades”, among others. For Wittgenstein, “working in philosophy—like work in architecture in many respects—is more a working on oneself”.¹ In Heidegger we find the recurring articulation wherein *Grund*, “reason” (in argument), is always “ground” (as floor, foundation, base). One is tempted to call these tropes metaphors, but principles of architecture are implicit in language—the pattern (*Muster*) of the grammatical.

While material and concrete, at least in principle, these architectural frameworks, when placed in relation to theoretical and philosophical schema, are structures of mirroring (reflection), of reinforcement (scaffolding), and of conceptualisation (drafting). The dream of the convergence of these three is the perpetual dream of metaphysics, and the desire to recover a metaphysics of completion is contiguous with that original *arche-* dream.

Architecture is thought made concrete and, thereby, a highly metaphysical aspiration. Hence the utopia of simultaneous reflection and transparency we find in the yearning of Scheerbart’s *Glasarchitektur*, 1914, a utopia not separable from psychic and physical health: “Sanatoria also will want glass buildings; the influence of splendid glass architecture on the nerves is indisputable”; “the new glass environment will completely transform mankind”; “if we want our culture to rise to a higher level, we are obliged, for better or for worse, to change our architecture.”²

After Scheerbart, the utopian understanding that mirroring, reinforcement, and conceptualisation could converge would split into fragments. Thought, then, does not move forward, but seems to move back a hundred years, to the Romantic understanding of the fragment-as-whole and the whole-as-fragment. From Friedrich Schlegel’s *Athenaeum Fragments*, 1798: “Many of the works of the ancients have become fragments. Many modern works are fragments as soon as they are written.”³ One could theorise that the fragment, in this formulation, is no longer a temporal vector. Fragmentation is no longer an index of time, but has become an index of form, a formal determination that bridges past and future. Moreover, the imaginary relation to a “whole” places the fragment in relationship to a viewer. The incomplete (or sick) viewer, as fragment, is thus allied to the hermeneutics of the fragment (at once incomplete and whole). The task of philosophy, then, is to theorise and concretise the fragment-in-the-whole and the whole-in-the-fragment, a task which is at once formal and theoretical, critical and aesthetic.

The work of An Te Liu takes as its starting point the history of twentieth-century architecture and its relationship to parallel or oblique modes of enquiry during the same era: the utopian social and theoretical goals of architecture; the relationship of cultural forms to the imagined environment and the organisation and housing of bodies; the history of the appliance and the product; the economies of obsolescence that undergird mass-production. Liu's art reveals the staging of this longing, while foregrounding—through techniques of tessellation across forms and media—a possibility and reality of the failure of such projects. The organisational and regulatory mechanisms recur: paranoia, reflected in the ecological regulation of one's surroundings, and



1

psychological duress. The condition of Liu's work seems to be the potential of a resolution between concepts such as hygiene, organisation, economic stability, and utopian understanding, with the material realities of the house, the blueprint, the product, the cast, and the fragment. The work, as a whole, posits the possibility of a union. The pathos of the work, however, consists in the reality of the fragment. Seen as a monad, in its totality, the work *itself* is a fragment that points to the fragmentation of discourses and cultural practices. The work's focus, with architecture as a more or less stable continuum of

reference, has progressed from the utility of the appliance, to the "image", print, or *gestalt* of architecture (writ large: Levittown), to the *archi*-architecture of the cast. In the cast, which combines seriality with uniqueness, the tactile and the haptic seem formally at odds with the medium's constitutive principle: repetition.

The casts are the attempt, then, to reconcile the organic and the non-organic (mathematical). Liu's recent cast-based works, such as *Brutalist Rice Cooker*, 2013, converge three modes: the ontology of the mass-produced product, seen in the inverse through casts of its form (packaging material such as styrofoam); the physical resemblance of this cast to canonical forms of architecture (Brutalism, a concrete block); and the uncanny distance-in-proximity of the familiar product (rice cooker) when frozen in the form of timelessness, a condition perhaps augmented by the fractal sites of production in which goods arise and are distributed in a globalised economy (the "sweatshop sublime" of late capitalism is invoked here). A key structure-theme would be that of the *Gnomon* (the title of a totemic 2014 work by Liu, and originally from the Greek word meaning "one that knows or examines"), a term with multiple valences once defined by Hero of Alexandria as that which, when added to an entity, makes a new entity similar to the starting one—in other words, the principle of subtraction-addition of the cast, allied to the logic of the fractal. Other cast-based works, with Greek and mythologically-inspired titles such as *Aphros* and *Eidolon*, both 2013–2014, similarly adopt a condition of negative self-casting as a formal principle, aligning with a Romantic hermeneutics of the fragment—the fragment as the product (for example, a form shaped from the void space of a Hello Kitty humidifier). The fragmentary nature of these products stems in part from their condition as waste, as superfluity in the surplus of products within late capitalism, which is determined by a principle of obsolescence. The artist's handmade glazes speak to an imagined authenticity, which bears a conflicted relation to the reproduced nature of the product and the cast. These works are a continuation of the themes—architecture, reproducibility, surplus, (self)-organisation, the fragment—explored by Liu for over 15 years. As late capitalism has deepened and accelerated, burying its factories and material processes in places like Shenzhen, our condition of estrangement from the product has become increasingly proximate and thus less

legible. At the same time, the technique of the self has allied itself more and more with the product: we see ourselves in the product, able only to constitute ourselves through the language and forms of mass-production. This is the terrain of the uncanny explored by Liu in these works, which are at once organic and wholly industrial, oscillating between formal and iconographic terrain. Temporally, works such as *Aphros* summon an iconography that is self-consciously "ancient" while reciprocally (and in its forms) invoking a future/past lacuna—they seem to be fragments from the future rather than the past. Just as J.G. Ballard once observed about the plaster casts of George Segal, they are "figures from some future Pompeii."⁴

It is worth noting in this context that the sculptural tradition of the bust is overlain with a significant misunderstanding, and hence a kind of ghost narrative: the portrait heads of antiquity displayed conventionally in museums, inspiration for the form that came of age in the early Renaissance, were often not in fact "busts" but fragments of whole-body statues. The form, then, is in many ways tied to an imaginary history, and in fact the result of the techniques of early museology. The ontology of the fragment, articulated systematically (and anti-systematically) during the Romantic era, is contiguous with this imagined history. In this light, Liu's work *George*, 2013, takes the traditional form—the bust-as-portrait—and enacts this composite fragmentation and concrete imaginary in three ways. First, by replacing the conventional and taxonomical indicators of a human subject by cooler, industrial ones: a movement from characteristics to segments, from the logic of uniqueness to the logic of replacement; second, the "George" in the bust's name refers to three close friends of the artist (all named George), and is thus a composite head; and third, oscillations in the work between organic and industrial/artificial forms (e.g. a green glaze, redolent of the organic, applied over mass-produced forms, with the manufacturer's imprint still discernible). When viewed in person from several perspectives, rotating around it in the room, the viewer perceives a significant mutation between industrial-seeming yet quasi-organic forms, and a counterintuitive shifting of this perspective. Gone is the classical-ideal suggestion of "correct" perspective (contemporary viewer aligned to ancient work) à la Johann Joachim Winckelmann, whose eighteenth-century writings were key in considering

neoclassicism as an aesthetic determination in an era that might still be *the* key instance of a superimposition of the past onto the future. Moreover, any uniqueness or subjectivity underlying the portrait—whose referents remain, perhaps, inscrutable—is displaced by the composite compositional technique. Though Liu's works seem formally "whole" at times, or smooth and complete, in fact their production speaks to their status as composites, as well as a collapse of future and past.

The six untitled photolithographs (*Units I-VI*, 2015) made by Liu from collages originally executed in 1999 are unusual in his oeuvre, yet at the same time frame many of his ongoing concerns: the decline of industrial traditions; a sensitivity and attunement to the negative (as thought, as



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index and condition of reproduction); the determination of twentieth-century architecture in relationship to other modes of cultural inquiry (applied arts, printmaking, theory). If Benjamin Buchloh, when writing about Isa Genzken, identified in her practice a move from "pictorial to sculptural, sculptural to architectural space", then these photolithographs, as though frozen, represent a collapse of the pictorial, the sculptural, and the architectural into one form.⁵ Works on paper, they are reproduced photographs of three-dimensional objects; these objects, via a reverse motion, resemble an impossible architecture,

sealed. They look like birds-eye or side views of buildings. They *house* nothing. In the end, they resemble not only the displaced dreams of Modern architecture, but the convergence of these dreams with the empty “housing” of the electronic product.

For a series of related projects initiated around 2000, Liu extended the investigation of the formal and architectural contours of the home appliance from two-dimensional to three-dimensional space. For *Airborne*, 2000, installed at the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver, Liu assembled 64 air treatment units—air ionisers, purifiers, ecologisers, humidifiers—horizontally, on a low-leaning pedestal, all painted white, and left switched on. The turning-white of these appliances recalls, in a way, the “ghost” convention in cartoon animation, where characters experiencing a change of state turn white, but more directly it might reference Le Corbusier’s “Law of Ripolin: A Coat of Whitewash”, in his book *L’art décoratif d’aujourd’hui*, 1925, which presents the (utopian/dystopian) fictive case of an indictment on colour: “every citizen is required to replace his hangings, his damasks, his wall-papers, his stencils, with a plain coat of white ripolin. *His home* is made clean. There are no more dirty, dark corners.... Then comes inner cleanliness.... Once you put ripolin on your walls you will be master of yourself.”⁶

Seen today, Le Corbusier’s “law” bears a conservative moralism. Does the conservative always conserve? Preserve? Or does it destroy? At one end of the gallery, plastic strips of a meat freezer served as a fringed door (refrigeration and freezing providing the regulatory function of maintainance and conservation); on an adjacent wall, a pair of metal handicap grab bars. The 64 air-modification devices played continuously, performing invisible, though real, actions on the air of the room, purging the air of itself, neutralising inflections such as scent into an approximation of “pure” air—a fiction as palpable as Le Corbusier’s “cult of light”. There is, it seems, an implicit conflict among the various devices, as if a limited resource (pollution, mold, dirt) was spread across an improbable number of units.

More to the point, these works reference an understanding of architectural Modernism associated with what Foucault called “biopower”: the call and compulsion to regulate the body under the strictures of the micro- and the macro-home. No longer merely domestic space,

in modernity the home becomes site for the (forced, automated) regulation of the body, self-segregated from dirt and excrement.

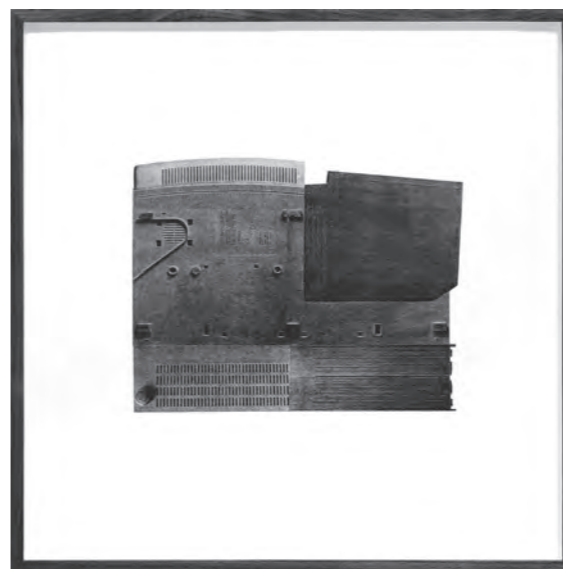
While Liu’s most direct reference in this work is to the interlinking of Modernism in architecture to ideas of hygiene and a lifestyle of “health”, the writings of Mary Douglas may shed comparative anthropological light. In *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, 1966, Douglas attempts to arrive at a comparative-universal understanding of “purity” (alongside related concepts such as sin, taboo, the primitive) from a social anthropological perspective, investigating taboos



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such as Jewish dietary restrictions and the Lele cult of the Pangolin. Of the conventions of home arrangement (even decoration), Douglas writes: “In chasing dirt, in papering, decorating, tidying, we are not governed by anxiety to escape disease, but are positively re-ordering our environment, making it conform to an idea. There is nothing fearful or unreasoning in our dirt-avoidance: it is a creative movement, an attempt to relate form to function, to make unity of experience.”⁷ There is no universal understanding of dirt: it is simply, as Douglas famously described it, “matter out of place”.⁸

For Douglas, concepts of pollution are pervasive across cultures because they are connected to languages of moral, ethical, and behavioral coercion on the one hand, and on the other to the insight that pollutions are “used as analogies for expressing a general view of the social order”.⁹ Hence, we might read the stigmatised “pollution” in Liu’s works as bearing, on a macro level, some relationship to the “social order” seen (and understanding itself) only in relationship to its antagonistic or antinomical forms: the primitive, the foreign, the invasive. For Douglas, our idea of “dirt” is based on two things: hygiene and respect for conventions, arguing that “when the community is attacked



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from outside at least the external danger fosters solidarity within. When it is attacked from within by wanton individuals, they can be punished and the structure publicly reaffirmed.”¹⁰ A third case, however, is also presented by Douglas: “But it is possible for the structure to be self-defeating. This has long been a familiar theme for anthropologists.... Perhaps all social systems are built on contradiction, in some sense at war with themselves.”¹¹

The “towers” of the columnar work *Exchange*, 2001, are comprised of 56 HEPA air purifiers. Draped by hair-like cables, the works must have produced an uncanny

sound while installed to run continuously at the Henry Urbach Gallery in New York. Assembling these appliances into tower formations in the exhibition space—its air repeatedly filtered and refiltered—again links hygiene with the semiotics of design and architecture. The clean, white lines and skeletal vents of the units’ surfaces recall architectural modernism, and the idealised futurity of science fiction—a trope that is more explicitly approached in works such as *Cloud*, 2008, which Liu likewise constructs from ionisers, sterilisers, humidifiers and ozone air cleaners, and *White Dwarf*, 2013, which consists of a sprawling array of outmoded domestic technologies. If the readymade since Marcel Duchamp represents the intrusion of the found object into the aesthetically pure space of the museum, then is it not significant that Duchamp chose a urinal (with the sullied signature of “R. Mutt”)? The “fountain” is a urinal; it is at once a signifier of modernity, cleanliness and the expurgation of waste, and yet a stable index of grime or filth. And, in this light how close is Duchamp’s *Fountain* to the sink in Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye, built in the Purist style between 1928 and 1931, shortly after the Law of Ripolin was proposed? Belying (or foregrounding) the “pure” interior/exterior of the building is a lavabo or sink prominently displayed and exposed in the Villa’s entry foyer. The sink, like Duchamp’s urinal, communicates both a sully of purity—the necessary regulatory processes of hygiene—and the completion of purity. Nadir Lahiji and Daniel Friedman, in their investigation of plumbing in architectural modernism, write: “Modern cleanliness departs from ancient ablution in its extension of hygiene to the psychological interior. Prohibition against dust and dirt marks the structure of the hygienic superego. This prohibition is aggressive; it propels modernism and identifies it. The clean body is also a plumbed body.”¹²

Works such as *Airborne*, *Exchange*, and *Cloud* have their theoretical and contextual origins in the last decade of the twentieth century. The same era provides the phobias and fears driving Todd Haynes’ film *Safe*, 1995.

In *Safe*, Carol White, a “homemaker” (that obsolete near-vocation), begins to develop unexpected and unexplained bodily symptoms such as fatigue, coughing, asthma, vomiting, convulsions—in sum, a diagnosis of the non-diagnosis MCS (“Multiple Chemical Sensitivity”), or so-called “twentieth-century disease”. Is it a coincidence

that when the regulatory mechanisms of the state began to be dissolved due to Reagan/Thatcher deregulation that a scheme of self-regulation (physical and mental health, economics) came to supplant it, as substitute? That the task of the self becomes, following Foucault, a regulatory and technological scheme? The psychological interior—the symbolic realm of the house—is no longer a scene of privacy. This is, of course, an extension of the foundational theme of modernity identified by Walter Benjamin: “Corresponding to these phantasmagorias of

capitalism is eroding the symbolic and real possibility of sleep, into a perpetual present of productive wakefulness, then the processes that once determined ideas like privacy and designated individual (as opposed to collective) identity have likewise been eroded—not least by startups and apps such as Tinder, Airbnb, and Uber that represent a significant advance in neoliberalism (and its “sharing” economies).¹⁴ It would seem that in a culture gone mobile, and an economy increasingly dependent on sharing (that is, not on autonomy but on mutual dependence) architecture



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the market, where people appear only as types, are the phantasmagorias of the interior, which are constituted by man’s imperious need to leave the imprint of his private individual existence on the rooms he inhabits.”¹³

One legacy of this is that architecture no longer seems a stable way of positing borders between inside and outside. As Jonathan Crary has recently argued in *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*, 2014, if twenty-first century

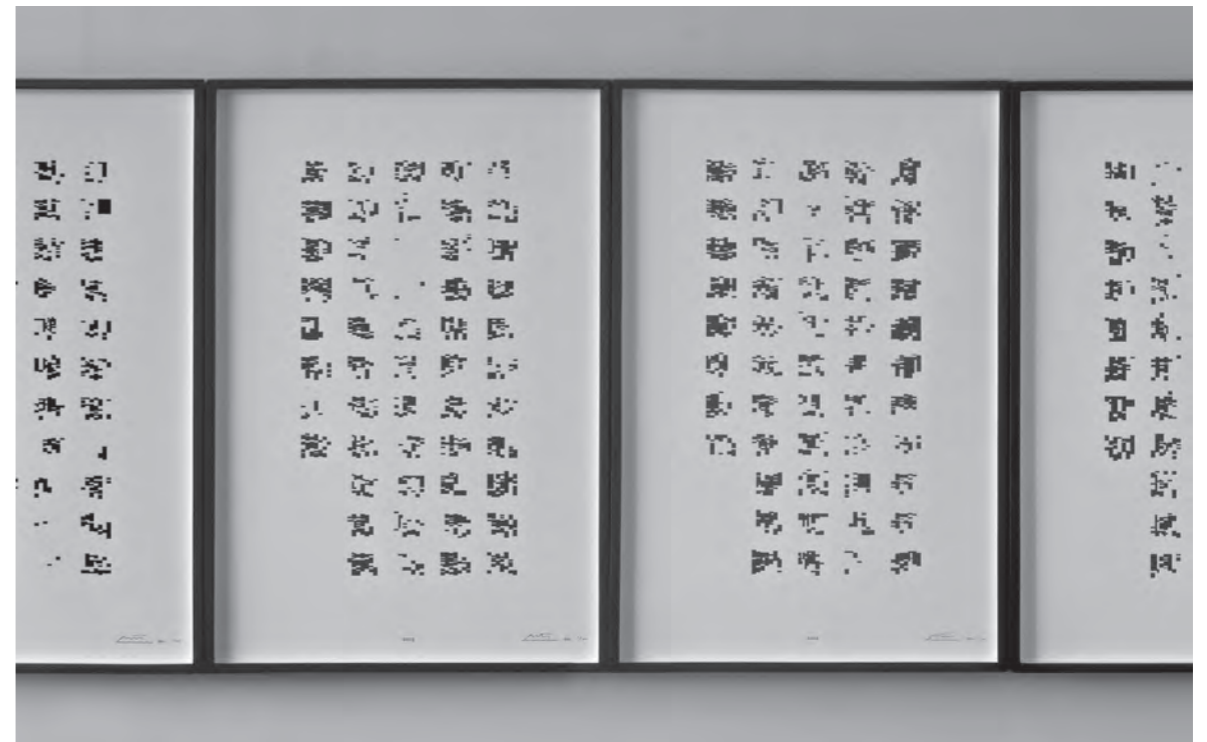
is no longer the determiner of inside and outside, parasite from host, contagion from purity.

Is it not, in this context, meaningful that the Great Recession and global financial crisis had its origins both on the most abstract level (structural implementation of credit) as well as on the most familiar and concrete-seeming one: through mortgage-backed securities, i.e. the home? Home ownership in North America was an

index of “autonomy”, and the metaphorical and financial *Grund* for the current world economy (and its breakdown) was in fact “the home” (the word *oikonomia* means “care of the home”). In 2009, at the height of that financial crisis, Liu installed his work *Title Deed* as part of the *Leona Drive Project* in Willowdale, a suburb of Toronto. The work was a site-specific installation in which the exterior of an archetypal suburban home—then abandoned, and later bulldozed—was sealed and painted green, giving it an unmistakable resemblance to the iconic plastic house

life” exemplified by the suburbs. As those ideas recede, green ghosts of an abandoned pasture, they get replaced with an ideology of neoliberal precarity that—under the narratives of “flexibility” and “sharing”—returns us to a state of perpetual vagabondism.

What makes up a home then, and what makes up a philosophy, if not the physical bounds of architecture made immaterial? The ten-part series of prints titled *Agenda 2000–2009*, produced in 2011, resemble at a distance Chinese calligraphy, largely due to their scroll-



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from the board game Monopoly. Through this frame of reference, Liu sardonically comments on the fate of a style of home that was stereotypically (and initially altruistically) formative to ideas of suburban “normalcy” in twentieth-century North America. Foreclosed on *en masse* during the recent recession, *Title Deed’s* Monopoly piece points to the hollowing out of the middle class, and the erosion of ideas about normalcy and “regular

like vertical orientation and the appearance that each “character” is a discrete pictogram. Closer inspection shows that the grain of each character is comprised of small, pixel-like units, and that, in composite, they resemble a rudimentary digital code. A clue to their meaning lies in how there are 52 ideograms on each page; in reality, these are screenshots of Liu’s weekly agenda—one sheet per year—abstracted so that each

character represents one week, the density of the artist's personal and professional engagements making up a composite image of Liu's activity in a given year. Certain months appear emptier or denser than others; 2008 (when the artist was on a residency in Berlin) contains far fewer engagements than 2009. There's a kind of wholehearted humour in how improbably precious one can be about one's own "activity", pristinely letterpressed on Strathmore, but as a record of activity the series has a direct relationship to the notion that art is simultaneously a log and a document. When placed alongside Liu's interest in the domestic appliance there's a sense that (as the identity of an artist and his practice are largely inseparable; for instance, Warhol's artist-as-company, or Beuys' "everyone is an artist") these runes look digitally-corrupted, as if the collapse of private and public realms of activity has already occurred.

...

These questions are not new. The push forward is always a push back, just as the attempt to concretise any Absolute will not, in its blunt force, sense the ethereality of ghosts and angels. The seeming virtualisation of everything—in which the physical is so deftly imbricated into the virtual—is, too, inherently a narrative of fragments, shambles, and ghosts. Liu's move away from an ontology of the appliance and into a fragmented and negative ontology of cultural debris, and an order of resemblance to the self-consciously "crafted" is, radically, an attempt to sculpt and map the *arche* of an inverted futurity, the virtual-real terrain in which ruins lie. What is a cast but a concretisation of the virtual or a disintegrated integration of the fragment? This mapping ought to be seen as philosophical, as a reflection of thought, which can never think itself (at best, perhaps, as mirror or negative). In this sense, one might think back to the German thinker Novalis' famed diagnosis of philosophy—architectural and material through-and-through—as a "transcendental homelessness" (*transzendentalen Obdachlosigkeit*), a "longing to be at home everywhere" (*überall zu Hause zu sein*).¹⁵

ENDNOTES

1. Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Culture and Value*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984, p. 16.
2. Paul Scheerbart and Bruno Taut: *Glass Architecture and Alpine Architecture*, Dennis Sharp ed., James Palmes and Shirley Palmer trans. New York: Praeger, 1972; respectively: pp. 62, 74, 41.
3. Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe: *L'Absolu Littéraire: Théorie de la littérature du romantisme allemand*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1978.
4. J.G. Ballard: *The Atrocity Exhibition*. San Francisco: RE/Search Publications, 1990, p. 15.
5. Benjamin H.D. Buchloh: Isa Genzken: The Fragment as Model in *Isa Genzken: Jeder braucht mindestens ein Fenster* (exh. cat.). Chicago: Renaissance Society; Frankfurt: Porticus; Brussels: Palais des Beaux-Arts; Munich: Städtische Galerie; Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, 1992.
6. Le Corbusier: *The Decorative Art of Today*, James Dunnett trans. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987, p. 188.
7. Mary Douglas: *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge, 2002, p. 2.
8. Douglas: *Purity and Danger*, p. 41.
9. Douglas: *Purity and Danger*, p. 3.
10. Douglas: *Purity and Danger*, p. 141.
11. Douglas: *Purity and Danger*, p. 141.
12. Nadir Lahiji and Daniel S. Friedman: *Plumbing: Sounding Modern Architecture*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997, p. 42.
13. Walter Benjamin: *Arcades Project*, Rolf Tiedemann ed., Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin trans. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 14.
14. Jonathan Crary: *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*, London: Verso, 2014.
15. Novalis: *Das Allgemeine Brouillon, Materialien zur Enzyklopädistik 1798/99*, no. 857.

FIGURES

1. *Brutalist Rice Cooker* 2013.
2. *George* 2013.
3. *Untitled (Unit III)* 1999/2015.
4. *Untitled (Unit IV)* 1999/2015.
5. *Airborne* 2000.
6. *Agenda 2000-2009* 2011 (detail).

Ken Lum and An Te Liu

DAYS OF FUTURE PASSED

A Conversation



Ken Lum (KL) Who is An Te Liu?

An Te Liu (ATL) A kid from Taiwan.

KL How did you get from there to here?

ATL By airplane. Cathay Pacific and BOAC, which still existed at that time. As for the reason, I guess my parents wanted to leave what was then a bit of a rural backwater. It was the early 70s and Canada seemed bright and shiny in the afterglow of Expo. It was the future.

KL And what has the future brought for you?

ATL At first it was lots of things—big cars, stereos, stores full of stuff. New hopes and desires, new people and customs, we got into ABBA. Everything moved forward. At some point I became interested in history and thought more about time and progress, so the future kind of threw me into the past, into loops across time.

KL Talk about the role language plays in your work starting with the titling. Your titles seem to be the product of a stream of consciousness, and to come from a deep place within you, despite their insouciance (or perhaps because of it). For one thing, the titles to your works feel temporal, in that they seem bracketed by a particular period of time or a particular set of signifiers you wish to invoke in the viewer. Language and temporality also infuse your work: from evocations of *Star Wars* and the language of cinema and science fiction, to British

modernist sculpture and discourses around the culture of making.

ATL Language and nomenclature are very important to me. I try to name things in a way that reflects my interests or intentions when starting on a new piece, while also describing the outcome of the piece—where it ended up and what other readings it evokes, even if accidental. Works usually begin with images and associations that have no name yet; they start with an impulse. As a work develops and I can see what is emerging, there are clues that lead me to do more research, where I find related (and often unexpected) lineages of concepts and ideas... and eventually, hopefully, a title that hits the right notes.

For *Order of Solids*, 2013, as an example, I was interested in the basic act of stacking objects into a totem or monument. I was using Brancusi's *Maiistra*, 1910–1912, as a kind of anti-model, as there was not this mythical or heroic dimension in my piece, which I saw more as a curious pile of remains. When it was almost done, I happened back upon Smithson's essay "Entropy and the New Monuments", 1966, something I had not read since grad school. He was talking about time, decay, science fiction (or science and fiction), obsolescence, all these themes that have been important to me. It is as if I was carrying his thoughts with me without realising it. In a passage where Smithson is speaking of Judd, there is this phrase "order of solids", and it seemed well-suited for appropriation. It is both "poly-" and "ambi-" valent—both serious (order as a system, society or hierarchy) and kind of simple, or even dumb—an arrangement, disposition,

or something supplied or served, like an “order” of fries. One day, as my assistant and I were completing the piece, he turned to me and said, “I’d like an order of solids, please.” For *BLAST*, 2011, I conceived of the work as an explosion or tornado of domestic objects, mostly moribund—it was initially inspired by the closing scene of Antonioni’s *Zabriskie Point*, 1970. Later, thinking about the early machine age led me to re-explore the works and writings of the Vorticist movement and from this I decided to adopt the title of their journal, *BLAST*, 1914–1915, as it worked descriptively as a noun and an action.... Of course, I was also interested in the Vorticist’s relationship to Futurism and their attitudes toward technology and progress.

KL Funny, whenever I think of *Zabriskie Point*, it is always the first scene with the handheld camera and the young black and white faces, including Angela Davis, all debating about race, oppression and empathy. But the final scene is certainly more iconic and compressed, indeed a revolutionary image. I want to continue on from this last question. Again, I am struck by your impressive free flow thinking, which I trust to have purpose or agency. Is the question of agency important to you? If so, how do you reconcile agency for today?

ATL I just think of myself as someone coming from a classic liberal arts education. Having studied Fine Art History, Renaissance Studies, and Cinema, I have the habit of collecting words, images, and associations that are interesting for whatever reason. They form a kind of archive that keeps building, and as I develop works I always revisit it to find connections that link ideas across epochs and disciplines. My work is a product of these linkages, and I guess the flow wants to be free in order to make the connections. The thinking is, at turns, concise and ambient, if that is possible. Whether this is a form of agency, I’m not sure. I personally ascribe to the “weak thought” camp of Gianni Vattimo as a way of trying to make constructive sense of history and meaning. What you bring up reminds me of things important to my formation: Surrealist methodologies, Schwitters, concrete poetry, J.G. Ballard... this is the kind of agency I can wrap my mind around. As far as today is concerned, I just know that I would never want to do a TED Talk.

KL It seems to me a recovery of the past is important to you, by way of modernist sculpture and literature, for instance. I am also thinking back to your earlier comment about landing in Canada at a time when everything seemed possible, and the period of the 1950s through to the mid-70s in Canada. In many ways, it was full of possibilities.

ATL Modernism seemed like a straight line pointing toward the future, yet modernist ideas were born in the past. The past is written into Modernism. Again, the loops forward and back are interesting—from our now to our future and back in time, from yesterday and yesterday’s tomorrow, to somewhere even further back. There is a kind of simultaneity of past and present in the way I look at things, I believe in eternal recurrences, maybe even reincarnation. Or at least the persistence of motives and forms over time. It’s kind of like the telephone game—the initial message gets garbled and funny things happen, but it is still there, in a different guise.

For example, the idea of utopia is perennial and I have been interested in how these visions morph and persist. Both *Zabriskie Point* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*, 1968, were released just before we arrived in North America, convinced of a better, more modern life. In different ways, the two movies question the possibilities of that time, the ideals and problems, while at the same time painting some scenario for the end of “the future”.

KL I wanted to add a commentary on your reference to the telephone game. As a child, I was introduced to the game by a teacher, only it was called “Chinese whispers”. At the time, I had no idea what that meant but I soon learned. For the rest of the year, whenever there was a bit of time for a break, the teacher would ask what game the students wanted to play, and someone would yell out: “Let’s play Chinese whispers!”

ATL Why did they call it that? Because the Chinese are prone to gossip, or garbling up messages? The telephone game is maybe silly, but I think of it when it comes to the transfer of meaning, or sense. A person can hear and understand the sentence correctly and then wilfully distort it, for whatever effect. Or they partially hear, and then make something up that sounds the same or ends up relaying a related version of the original phrase. Or there

is a total rupture. There are mistakes and improvisations that produce pleasure from the vagaries of language and apprehension. It makes me think of how “error” can be interesting, even productive in making work. Part of me operates under the understanding that there is no complete understanding. I enjoy bad translations, say, in subtitles for martial arts movies. I remember one where the evil guy scoffs, “His Kung-Fu is not academic”. You understand what was meant to be said, and how the translation went a bit odd, but the effect is kind of awesome. The mutation of language and meaning figures in how I title my works. I spend a lot of time consulting etymology dictionaries and am curious as to how words morph over time and between cultures—I like it when a word or term works on several levels, in different contexts. In a way, the life of words is a bit like the telephone game, initial meanings can get buried as new associations emerge, but somewhere, they are still there.

KL It was called Chinese Whispers, I assumed even as a young child, because it was a racial caricature of an alien sounding language to white Canadian ears. It was really troubling to me at the time. Your point on bad translations is well taken. I think that is the great strength of English over a language like French (which I speak)—while proper command of English is important, correctness is not fetishized to the degree that is found with French. Hybridity is key to the growth of a language. But what is at the core of your interest in the mutability of meaning through language and its imprecision? I agree with you that there is no such thing as complete understanding—which is quite Tao by the way. I’m curious, when you mention how an odd translation can produce an awesome effect, what comes with it?

ATL The odd translation directs attention back to the conventional or “correct” use of grammar, and defamiliarises it. In that space of not totally knowing comes an adjustment of language, a new capacity for words to communicate. Altered nuances of meaning, in their “incorrectness”, can offer a description or sentiment that is unexpectedly apropos. I guess I’m thinking that there is an instrumentality to imprecision and its effects.

KL The future is often referenced in your work, can you talk more about how utopian ideas drive your thinking?

ATL Utopias have been an obsession of mine, because of my upbringing, and then because of research I did on early modernist urbanism. Perhaps utopia is not the right term—as it wasn’t a “no-place” I was looking at, but real places, practical experiments stemming from radical new visions of how we might live. By the time I began making early works, such as *Airborne*, 2000, and *Exchange*, 2001, I was interested in where these visions began and where they ended up. Parts of 1960s and 70s Toronto reminded me of Le Corbusier’s Ville Radieuse, as did some of the city’s office parks and suburban campuses built in the 80s. It seemed that by the turn of the millennium, these motivations had largely been emptied of their idealism. The brave new world had become an expedient means of erecting buildings and developing land. I was reading Karl Popper at the time, who argued that utopias were no longer tenable because you could never get people to agree on a set of abstract ideals, but you could more likely get consensus on a set of concrete evils. This was depressing but also seemed true, especially for our time. With *Airborne* I made a quasi-Corbusian proposal, all pure and spacious, but used then-contemporary air purifiers as stand-ins for the buildings. It was kind of a utopia then and now—revolutionary architecture became a collection of domestic appliances used to sanitise airspace and keep us safe from germs. In a way, hope turned into a kind of fear, as the possible gave way to the preventable.

KL I am leading up to Levittown (the one in New Jersey not far from where I live), as well as Le Corbusier and all things post-war modernist. The thought came to me that the quintessential major city in terms of Modernism might be Toronto, where the other side of the dialectic of Modernism—that of its own decay—has never really taken hold. Of course, for any city, there are problems, but as an image, Toronto could do a lot worse. The grid planning, the futuristic City Hall, Jane Jacobs, Henry Moore, Sorel Etrog, Mies van der Rohe, Levittown style housing in Etobicoke, the many national institutions that were launched in the 1950s and 1960s that reverberated most resoundingly in Toronto. Is this also what you are doing through your art: theorizing Toronto, or more widely Canada?

ATL You remind me of how indelibly marked I am by my early environs, which I had much fascination for, along with a tinge of dread. I sometimes wish we could keep the good bits of modernity and dispense with some others. You are right about Toronto, as an image and as real place. The new City Hall (with its flying saucer council chamber); Ontario Place (the closest thing to Constant's New Babylon ever built); the old Terminal 1 at Pearson airport (which in retrospect makes me think lovingly of Tati's *Playtime*)—these are my touchstones. And in Montreal, with Expo 67 there was Moshe Safdie's Habitat, a pretty good attempt at realising Yona Friedman's weightless dream. These were monuments of an era when it seemed possible to express a communal idea of being modern. They will all make excellent ruins—except Terminal 1, which just plain disappeared.

I think in my work I am ruminating on modernity, progress, and perhaps decay in general, starting with what I know most closely. I would love to visit the Levittown near you and see what it is like now. For *The Leona Drive Project*, 2009, and my project *Title Deed*, I got to spend a lot of time in Willowdale, in an area much like Levittown—the oldest post-war suburb in the country (from the early 50s), built to house returning soldiers and their families. I grew up in an 80s suburb, but this was the real deal. Being there seemed authentic and historical. I spoke to people who had lived there for over 50 years and loved the place. The trees were mature; the houses had mellowed over the years. It was a real place. But then these homes were no longer viable in today's real estate market and a developer bought seven adjacent houses in order to demolish them, rezone and build monster houses in the current idiom. I got to work on one house before it was flattened. It was 2009 and the height of the financial crash, which was in part brought on by the subprime mortgage crisis, so I thought to transform the house into a life size Monopoly piece. Like many modern projects, Willowdale had its virtues but could not escape the fate of changing times. It makes me wonder if the cycle from innovation to obsolescence will keep speeding up somehow.

KL I'm glad you brought up *Title Deed*. I think it is a beautiful work, funny and touching at once. A simple house such as the one you transformed is no longer viable in terms of today's realty market, as you say. I can't help

but think of the irony that micro-space living gets promoted while small bungalow homes are no longer deemed viable. It is not the amount of space that isn't viable but the logic set by development. I was recently in Atlantic City, and as you probably know the board game Monopoly is based on the place. That city has gone through a tortuous roller coaster ride of ups and downs and booms and busts. From its very beginning as an incorporated city in the mid-nineteenth century, it has been a story of land development from marshland, a few big railroad owners buying up the land around Atlantic City and then extending rail service and promoting it to no end. Your *Title Deed* is a lot more poignant than a Monopoly house piece because it is real, but what is or has happened to Willowdale is also very different from Atlantic City. For starters, it is a Canadian suburban situation.

ATL What makes a property, or an object valuable is a relative set of factors—cultural shifts, changing desires. The irony you point out is so true—seven bungalows that could not sell for 300K were razed to build ten not much bigger homes, on smaller lots, and they all sold for over a million each. Speculators understand how to respond to and create demand. I'm not too familiar with Atlantic City, except for watching *Boardwalk Empire*, but I imagine it to be almost as volatile and cut-throat as Monopoly. Basically, you win by making everybody else go bankrupt. For the typical homeowner, it is easy to not think of a house as collateral on a debt—our thoughts turn more to shelter and ideas of “home”. But during the 2008–2009 crash, the obscure financial machinations behind the mortgage industry became painfully apparent. A family could be getting kicked out of their place in Florida while a bank was going under in Iceland, and the two were connected somehow. I once had to give a lecture on *Title Deed* and I called it “Lost in Transaction”, which seemed kind of apt.

KL Monopoly as a board game strikes me as very suburban, unfair as that may be. It seems of a specific time and certainly in line with the development of suburbs in the most familiar sense. Again, the ethos of a more hopeful era, and the Modernism not so much of Richard Neutra, but of lower to middle class suburbia as conceived by architectural firms and civic planners. In your sculptures of carved and cast styrofoam you conflate Barbara Hepworth

with the packaging of middle class consumer objects, paying reference to this class or the idea of solutions for this class. Is this fair to say?

ATL Yes, totally. I am as compelled with earlier phases of Modernism as I am aware it is something I pretty much missed. By the time I could say “avant-garde”, it was not even recent history. It is fascinating to watch Hepworth videos on YouTube, seeing her carve stone by the ocean. She is in her element. I did not grow up with a chisel in my hand, my father handed me a Dustbuster and asked me to vacuum his Buick Electra—this was my context. I was raised on technology, gadgets, plastic things, infomercialised things. They came and then they disappeared, and then there were more. It seemed great. The latest epoch of a civilization that also created the Parthenon, which was great too. I think my work ruminates on the nature of progress and change in general, and asks questions of temporality versus permanence. Not long ago I got to meet Yo Yo Ma, and when he looked at the works from my exhibition *MONO NO MA* (which roughly translates from Japanese as “space of the thing” or “thing-space”), he offered that my exhibition title could also have been “*Mono No Aware*”, which is a beautiful term akin to a deep empathy for a thing, together with a wistful feeling in realising the fleeting nature of the thing. In working with polystyrene packing, I have been dealing with objects of global mass consumption, but also objects that are no longer present. Instead, they are just traces and impressions left behind, some decipherable, some not. They are already casts or fossils of things, which are then carved up and recast. The object is absent but it is recalled in another form. The object fades quickly, but its casing persists. In turning foam into ceramics and bronzes, I am kind of trading one form of permanence for another.

KL You are an immigrant in a world of enlarging numbers of immigrants. What is the figure of the immigrant to you?

ATL To me this figure is necessarily faced with an “adventure of difference” (Vattimo again). Whether it is an unsettling adventure or an excellent one—that depends. For a while now, it has been the latter for me. At the beginning, it was about alienation, this must have been even more so the case for you. I was the only

Asian in my class through most of primary school and felt uncomfortably “other”. Things were much more homogenous then. Migration has increased, and many major cities are becoming more like a big international space station. I've lived in Los Angeles, Paris, Berlin, and Vancouver. In Vancouver it is maybe easier to get sashimi than bread. It reminds me of the polyglot milieu of *Blade Runner*. The increasing hybridity of places like these is important in that you form a perspective that sees things, ideas, values as relative to one another. When I lived in Vancouver and made a personal calling card, I put my title as “Tourist”. It was important to realise the importance and the good things about being a visitor, a stranger; to be “other” in an expanding sea of others, to be away, yet feeling at home.

KL What do you see on the road ahead?

ATL More adventures I hope. There are a lot of things on my list. One thing is that I want to experience zero-gravity. I'd like to travel to outer space.

Kitty Scott

AN TE LIU: AN INCOMPLETE GLOSSARY



2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY (1968, dir. Stanley Kubrick) Think of the famous match cut from the bone-weapon to the orbital satellite... and the millions of years passing between these scenes.

THE ARCHER The popular name for Henry Moore's sculpture, whose official title is *Three-Way Piece No. 2*. It was unveiled in 1966 in Nathan Phillips Square in front of Toronto City Hall.

ASTRONAUTS Space travel belongs easily to science fiction but it is a reality we live with.

BALDWIN VILLAGE Neighbourhood located along a pleasant, short, narrow street that crosses Spadina Avenue just north of Dundas Street near the Art Gallery of Ontario, where I work. It is both a residential and a commercial area with many restaurants. Adjacent to Toronto's Chinatown, it was, in the early 1900s, a largely Jewish neighbourhood and later became a hangout for American draft dodgers. Since then it has given way to Asian immigrants. When Liu's family first arrived in Canada they lived here, on Baldwin Street, in an apartment above the Yet Sing Company, one of the first tofu manufacturers in Ontario. Later they moved close to the Ontario Science Centre near the Don Valley. This was followed by an adolescence spent in Guelph, west of Toronto. Liu left home to earn a liberal arts degree in Art History and Renaissance Studies at the University of Toronto and later he studied Architecture at SCI-Arc in Los Angeles, where he lived for eight years. Coincidentally, Liu now lives at the other end of Baldwin Street.

BLAST (2011) A domestic disturbance, involving a Nintendo, a Dustbuster, an Easy-Bake oven, almost everything but the kitchen sink. An implosion or explosion, frozen in time and space.

BOAC BAG Liu's bag of choice is a navy and white airline tote issued by the British Overseas Airways Corporation, now long gone. Recalling the modern vibe of 70s air travel, Liu carries it everywhere. It is the same bag carried by his father as they boarded the plane to emigrate to Canada.

BUMBLE-BEE YELLOW While much of Liu's palette is evacuated of colour, his living room furniture is a very intense yellow.

CYLON RAIDER A starfighter used by the Cylons in the series *Battlestar Galactica*, introduced in the 80s.

FOX MULDER The main character in the science fiction/horror series *The X-Files*, shot in Vancouver in the late 90s when Liu lived there. It had a strange hold over the city, as James Wolcott noted at the time: "*The X-Files* and *Millennium* are both shot around Vancouver, where the low ceilings and low, damp skies keep a lid on a lingering fog that mildews and wilts the corners of every image with free-floating dread. Even the sunlight looks a little ill."¹ One of the show's most famous props was a poster hanging in Mulder's basement office. It depicts a flying saucer hovering in a cloudy sky over a green landscape. Below the UFO is a text in capital

letters exclaiming, “I WANT TO BELIEVE”. This iconic image represents the ethos of the series as a whole.

LYDIA DAVIS (American, b. 1947) I just read the story “20 Sculptures in One Hour” from *The Collected Stories of Lydia Davis*, in which she ruminates on looking at a number of sculptures within an allotted period of time. Is three minutes too long or too short for looking at a single sculpture? It depends on the work, I imagine,



1

although any sculpture of interest for me requires repeated viewings over a very long time.

DUMPLINGS Found in abundance in Liu’s Kensington Market neighbourhood. He mentions the humble and comforting dumpling in lectures and talks when discussing notions of “home” or, more specifically, *Heimat*. My (and his) favourites are found at Mother’s Dumplings and Asian Legend.

EIDOLON (2014–2015) Ceramic critters, equally from an ancient time or the present. They peer with two faces, like Janus—one looking to the past and one toward the future.

FILE In conversation Liu and I have discussed the Toronto artists he finds interesting. He often mentions General Idea. You can easily imagine him being drawn to the sensibility of the work, with its references to Pop, architecture, and design. When he was still a teenager he



2

acquired a copy of their magazine *FILE* from 1984, whose cover features the three artists in bed together.

FOSSILS I remember the first time I ever saw petrified wood. I was in first grade and at the time my mother was teaching at Viscount Bennett High School in Calgary and I accompanied her as she led a field trip to Alberta’s Badlands. I could not believe how much the material

looked like wood, but was so much denser and heavier. It was my introduction to fossils. More recently I lived and worked in Banff and during that time became fascinated by Charles Doolittle Walcott’s 1909 find of the Burgess Shale. One of my favourite fossils from this find is *Hallucigenia*, a striking sea creature with an equally striking name that lived more than 500 million years ago. Liu’s newer sculptures take a cue from these ancient precursors. As much as they seem to peer into the future, his objects borrow the look of things that possess deep histories and the patina of distant times.

ALBERTO GIACOMETTI (Swiss, 1901–1966) “All the sculptures of today, like those of the past, will end one day in pieces.... So it is important to fashion one’s work carefully in its smallest recess and charge every particle of matter with life.”

HENRY MOORE SCULPTURE CENTRE at the Art Gallery of Ontario. The largest collection of Henry Moore sculptures outside of England, housed in John C. Parkin’s bold cubic 1974 expansion to the museum, which is just under a ten-minute walk from the artist’s studio. Wandering around the airy modern space containing these mostly figurative works, I feel as though I were in a futuristic graveyard dedicated to fragments of dinosaur bones, or on the set of a 1960s science-fiction movie with its curiously outdated sense of a modern utopia. Perhaps by serendipity, Liu worked for two summers at the Art Gallery of Ontario while an undergraduate student in art history.

KENSINGTON MARKET The place where Liu lives and works. It is an area of Toronto bordering on Chinatown, that tourists are encouraged to visit for its embodiment of the city’s history, a history which has disappeared in other parts of downtown. Like Old Montreal or Vancouver’s back alleys, made famous by the film industry, Kensington Market is a place that distinguishes Toronto from other cities, and even from its surrounding environment. Jane Jacobs wrote of Toronto as a city of distinctive neighbourhoods, like this one. Shabby and bohemian, it is a striking contrast to those areas that characterise contemporary Toronto: its shoreline along Lake Ontario, its skyline defined by the CN Tower and the Ludwig Mies van der Rohe-designed TD Centre.

BILLY MEIER (Swiss, b. 1937) A great photographer of unidentified flying objects.

MOTHER SHIP A mother ship is a boat, an aircraft, or spacecraft. It has the ability to release or recover a smaller version of itself.

NEW DAWN FADES (2013) Two beings; a beginning, or perhaps an end. Liu seized on the melancholic title while watching the Joy Division film *Control*.



3

ISAMU NOGUCHI (American, 1904–1988) A great sculptor of familiar yet unidentifiable forms. Liu finds refuge in his studio-*cum*-shrine in Long Island City.

NUCLEAR ENERGY (1966) More Moore.

POOKIE The name of Liu's friendly tuxedo cat. Formerly a stray, she assists him daily and has performed in the artist's videos.

RICE COOKER A venerable item in the artist's life; he often wears a memorable lapel pin of a rice cooker. In 2013 Liu sculpted a three-dimensional interpretation of a curious image appearing on the Wikipedia page for polystyrene foam. He slip cast it in stoneware and fired it with a fine celadon craquelure glaze. The order of



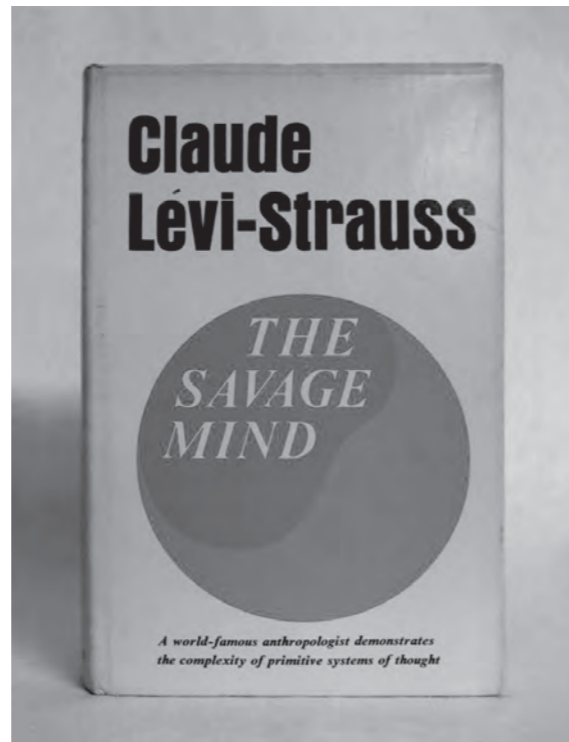
4

semblance seemed part appliance, part Boston City Hall, or related concrete buildings from the 60s and 70s. Liu christened the piece *Brutalist Rice Cooker*; it is a work I like very much.

THE SAVAGE MIND Seminal work of Claude Lévi-Strauss (French, 1908–2009) which examines the *bricoleur*, who keeps ordering and re-ordering his

collection of “odds and ends” (*des bribes et des morceaux*) in the attempt to find out their meaning. A treatise that has been a touchstone for Liu from his graduate thesis to this day.

STARSHIP ENTERPRISE A fictional spaceship. Liu's early work with air purifiers and other pieces of domestic appliance technology was highly influenced by this and many other designs belonging to the cinematic and televised science fiction narratives of his childhood.



5

STUDIO Liu's current studio occupies a basement in what was once presumably a shop in Toronto's Kensington Market. At a time when fewer and fewer artists have studios, he chooses to work in a high-ceilinged space lit with daylight fluorescents. His workshop is filled with the traditional—and not-so-traditional—residue of the artist's work-in-progress: clay, moulds, piles of foam, and other materials. It hums with both manual and digital labour, as an assistant works on a

large computer, meticulously editing image files. An index seemingly containing images of almost every work Liu has made stretches across the wall and can be referenced at any moment in time.

STYROFOAM While some people collect scholar's rocks, Liu collects expanded polystyrene (or, styrofoam) used to pack consumer objects. It is spread throughout his studio. He looks for pieces from which to cast positives out of negatives. He assembles various pieces, carving,



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honing, and further working the material before making moulds for casting in clay and bronze. Increasingly, he fuses the foam to rocks (which Liu also collects) and other objects, creating fossils of the future.

TAIWAN Liu was born here in 1967, in Tainan, near to the Tropic of Cancer.

TENDER The name given to a smaller ship that assists the mother ship.

TITLE DEED Liu's monument to the Global Financial Crisis of 2008–2009. The house, surely no longer a home, has become a life-size Monopoly piece.

TORONTO Each morning when Liu awakes and enters his open-plan living room he sees, out the south-facing ribbon window, the iconic CN Tower that seems

to proclaim, “I am Toronto”. As a child he watched the tower go up and now it is slowly disappearing in a shimmering fog of newer, shinier ones. Downtown is booming. There are those gigantic insect-like cranes all over the city and they seem to multiply. The artist often thinks about the protagonist played by James Spader in the movie adaptation of J.G. Ballard's *Crash* (filmed by David Cronenberg in Toronto) as he observes intensifying

traffic from his apartment tower and says, “Are there more cars?”. The city is home to many artists. Among them are familiar names—Michael Snow, our most famous resident, was born here and left for New York, only to return a little later; General Idea resided in Toronto before eventually leaving for New York. There are so many others. Toronto is now considered to be the fourth-largest city in North America, with more than half of its population coming from somewhere else. Liu’s family emigrated here in October 1970 and found the cold climate quite trying.

TORONTO CITY HALL (1965, arch. Viljo Revell)
Yesterday’s tomorrow.

WHITE DWARF Made in 2012, the year the world was supposed to end, and initially installed in the freight dock beneath Toronto City Hall. An eerie orb suspended in space, its surface a dense terrain of innumerable objects. A final resting place for all our things that have come and gone.

THE X-FILES When I first met Liu he was living in Vancouver and using stacked sponges to make paintings and sculptures. At that time, *The X-Files* was being shot in Vancouver, often using the Vancouver Art Gallery as a location. Sometimes when looking at Liu’s sculptures, I feel like they have been made for another parallel place and time. Perhaps it is the place of extra-terrestrial life or paranormal activity, the place Scully and Mulder were trying to identify.

“YOU WILL TRAVEL FAR AND WIDE”
Good fortune.

ENDNOTES

1. James Wolcott: Too Much Pulp, *The New Yorker*, January 6, 1997, pp. 76–77.

FIGURES

1. *FILE Magazine: General Idea’s 1984 and the 1968-1984 FILE Retrospective*, vol. 6, nos. 1 and 2, 1984.
2. Cambrian Period Trilobite fossil from the Burgess Shale.
3. Henry Moore, *Nuclear Energy*, 1966.
4. Pookie, the artist’s cat.
5. Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, 1966.
6. Liu family departing from Songshan International Airport, Taipei.



LIST OF WORKS



[1]

Eidolon II-IV 2014

Slip cast earthenware with tarnished silver glaze
10 x 6.8 x 15 CM



[5]

Maschinenmensch 2013

Slip cast stoneware with manganese-based glaze
16.5 x 14.4 x 32.5 CM
Steel base
16 x 13.5 x 107 CM



[7]

Son of Cong 2015

Slip cast stoneware with overglaze pigmentation
12 x 13.5 x 14 CM
Claridge Collection, Montréal



[2]

Eidolon V-I, Eidolon VI-I, Eidolon III-I
2014

Slip cast earthenware with red terra sigilata and pigmented wax; slip cast earthenware with chestnut slip and pigmented wax; slip cast earthenware with copper oxide slip
8.8 x 13.4 x 20.8 CM, 16.5 x 13.4 x 31 CM
16 x 11 x 22 CM



[10]

Peregrine Slip 2013

Slip cast stoneware with iron-based glaze
4.5 x 29 x 5.5 CM



[6]

George 2013

Slip cast earthenware with pigmented wax
15 x 18 x 24 CM
Claridge Collection, Montréal



[4]

Formation III 2014

Slip cast stoneware with grey slip and manganese dioxide
10 x 5 x 18 CM



[7]

Brutalist Rice Cooker 2013

Slip cast stoneware with overglaze pigmentation
20.5 x 19 x 20.5 CM
Majudia Collection, Montréal



[11]

Delivery System 2013

Slip cast stoneware with tin oxide glaze
10 x 15 x 86.5 CM



[14]

Ruin 2014

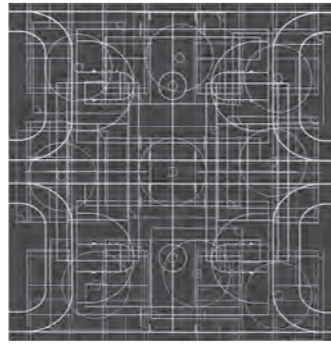
Slip cast earthenware with pigmented wax
20 x 22 x 17 cm



[18]

Lacuna 2014

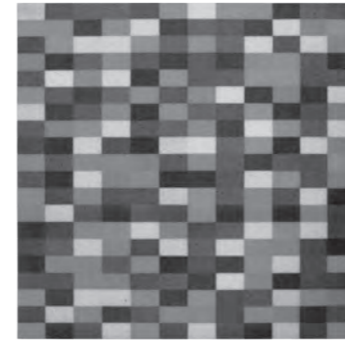
Slip cast earthenware with chestnut slip
and pigmented wax
6.3 x 12 x 34.8 cm



[23]

Arena 2003

Vinyl on acrylic
162.5 x 167.6 x 7.6 cm



[29]

Soft No.5 1998

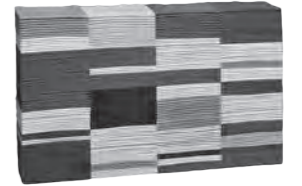
Foam sponges
152.4 x 152.4 x 6 cm



[32]

Title Deed 2009

Suburban home, latex block filler, paint
920 x 790 x 760 cm approx



[37]

No Molestar 2006

Cotton t-shirts
104 x 36 x 66 cm



[15]

Formation V 2014

Slip cast stoneware with pigment
6.8 x 8.9 x 31 cm



[19]

Hodos 2013

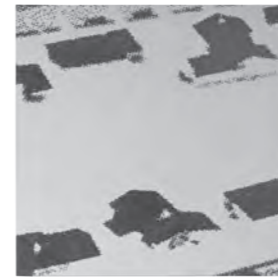
Slab-built stoneware with nickel oxide glaze
7 x 4 x 11 cm
Claridge Collection, Montréal



[24,28]

Che 2006/2011

Staples on drywall
157 x 140.5 cm



[30]

Levittown (Caulk study no.1) 2009

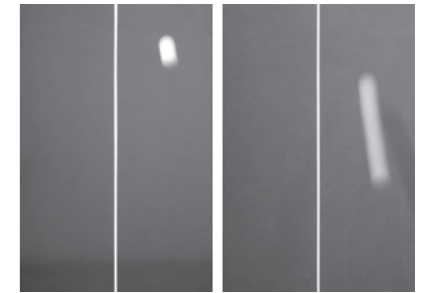
Caulk and acrylic on aluminium panel
81 x 81 cm



[34]

E (Intraocular) 1998

Oil on plexiglas
81.6 x 81.6 cm each



[38]

Prepared Ground 2004

16 mm colour film transferred to DVD;
13:30 loop projected in room coated
with regulation table tennis paint
144.8 x 256.5 cm (projection stills)



[16]

Decline and Fall 2014

Slip cast earthenware with pigmented wax
16 x 16.5 x 42 cm



[21]

Cell 2013

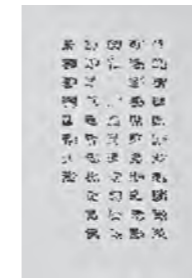
Slip cast earthenware with pigmented wax
24.5 x 29 x 6.5 cm



[26]

ID / EGO / SUPER 2011

Lightboxes
109.2 x 20.3 x 66 cm, 144.7 x 20.3 x 66 cm
180.3 x 20.3 x 66 cm



[31]

Agenda 2000–2009 2011

Letterpress on Strathmore, set of ten prints
30 x 44 cm each



[34,35]

Dado no.3 2006

Dado no.4 2007

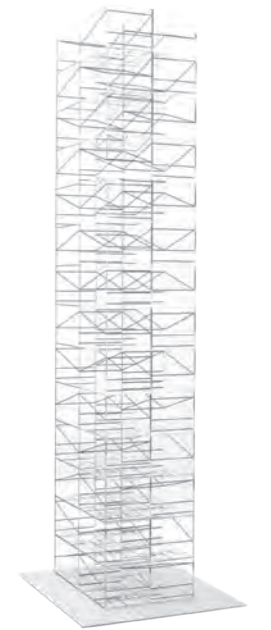
Lack side tables
152 x 55 x 5 cm each



[36]

*Plane Figure Diagram of 'Pleasure' and
'Illusion' in Garden of Yuan Ming
Yuan, Beijing* 2004

Silkscreen on plexiglas block
17.8 x 11.43 x 10.1 cm



[39-40]

Complex (Tower of Squash no.1) 2004

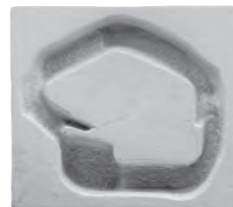
Vinyl marking tape on acrylic
31.75 x 49.5 x 216 cm



[17]

Formation I-I, Formation II-I 2014

Slip cast black-pigmented stoneware
10 x 3.8 x 13.4 cm, 14 x 3.8 x 14 cm



[22]

Enigmatic Depression 2013

Slip cast earthenware with pigmented wax
28.5 x 25.5 x 5 cm



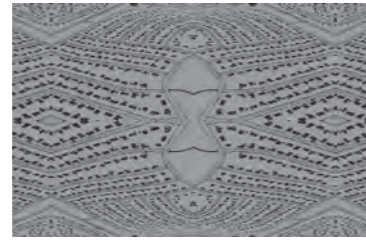
[41]

Pattern Language: Levittown (red) 1999
Inkjet print on vinyl
57 x 243.8 cm
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA)



[41]

Pattern Language: Levittown (white) 1999
Inkjet print on vinyl
57 x 243.8 cm
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA)



[42]

Pattern Language: Levittown (seafoam) 2007
Silkscreen on paper
68.5 x 365.8 cm each roll
Art Institute of Chicago



[44]

Pattern Language: Levittown (white) 2007
Silkscreen on paper
68.5 x 365.8 cm each roll
Art Institute of Chicago



[45]

Gnomon 2013
Cast plaster with pigmented wax
16 x 16.5 x 183 cm
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



[46]

Tropos II/II/I (for Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven)
Tropos I/I/I (for Djuna Barnes)
Tropos III/III/I (for Gertrude Stein)
2014
Cast concrete with patina
Cast hydrostone with pigmented wax
17 x 19.8 x 191.7 cm, 10 x 13 x 120 cm
30.5 x 30.5 x 231 cm



[49]

Tropos II/II/II (for Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven)
Tropos I/I/II (for Djuna Barnes)
2014
Cast hydrostone with pigmented wax
Cast bronze with patina
17 x 19.8 x 191.7 cm, 10 x 13 x 119.8 cm



[50]

Exchange 2001
HEPA air purifiers, cords;
56 units running continuously
45.7 cm in diameter x 32.5 cm each column
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA)



[52]

Untitled (Lint) 1999
Lint, wax paper, glass
50.8 x 76.2 cm



[53]

Airborne 2000
Air ionisers, ecologisers, humidifiers;
64 units running continuously
365.7 x 487.7 x 45.7 cm



[54-55]

Cloud 2008
Air purifiers, ionisers, sterilisers, humidifiers,
ozone air cleaners; running continuously
520.7 x 370 x 210.8 cm
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA)



[56]

Ghost (das Wolkenbügel) 2008
Silver gelatin fibre-based print
83.2 x 83.2 cm



[58]

Craft and Industry (Dessau Bauhaus) 2008
Silver gelatin fibre-based print
83.2 x 83.2 cm



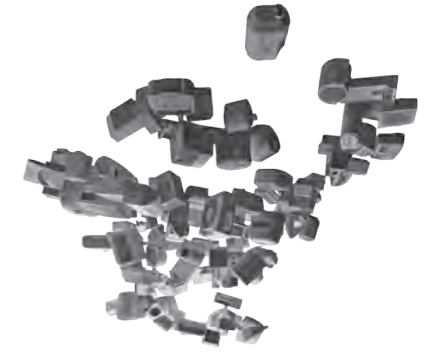
[60]

GVR 1316 2008
Silver gelatin fibre-based print
67.3 x 67.3 cm



[61]

Stealth Mobile 2004
Inkjet print on paper, metal, filament
61 x 61 x 82 cm approx



[64,66]

Blast 2011
Various materials
335 x 305 x 305 cm approx



[65,68]

White Dwarf 2012
Various materials
200 cm in diameter



[69]

Eidolon V-III 2014
Slip cast stoneware with tarnished silver glaze
13.4 x 8.8 x 20.8 cm



[70]

Matter 2008
Closed-circuit surveillance camera, light, air-
borne particulates; two projections over 18 days
480 x 320 cm each projection



[71]

Obsolete Figure in Space 2014

Cast bronze with patina
24.8 x 12 x 36.8 cm
Steel and concrete base
15 x 15 x 101.6 cm



[73-74]

Apbros 2013/2014

Press moulded earthenware with sawdust additions, copper oxide slip, and pigmentation
42 x 13.5 x 45 cm
Plaster base
28 x 10 x 44.5 cm
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Cast concrete with patina
43 x 13 x 48 cm
Plaster base
30 x 17 x 44 cm



[76]

Mono a Mono I 2013

Slip cast stoneware with iron-based glaze; three parts
2.5 x 4 x 28 cm, 2.5 x 5 x 33 cm
2.5 x 4 x 33 cm



[77]

The Gift 2015

Slip cast stoneware with pigmented wax
16 x 12 x 20.8 cm
Claridge Collection, Montréal



[78]

Eidolon VI-II 2014

Cast concrete with patina
17 x 14 x 31.7 cm



[79]

Solid State 2014

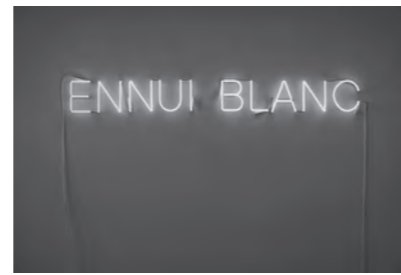
Cast plaster with pigmented wax
20.3 x 50.8 x 61 cm



[80]

Eidolon VII-I, Eidolon IV-III, Eidolon I-I 2014

Slip cast stoneware with black slip; slip cast stoneware with copper oxide slip; slip cast earthenware with tarnished silver glaze
19.8 x 14.4 x 31.7 cm, 10 x 7 x 17 cm
10 x 7 x 15 cm



[85]

Ennui Blanc 2010

Neon sign
193 x 20 cm



[88-89]

Order of Solids 2013

Slip cast earthenware
25 x 25 x 186.5 cm
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



[90]

Formation IV 2014

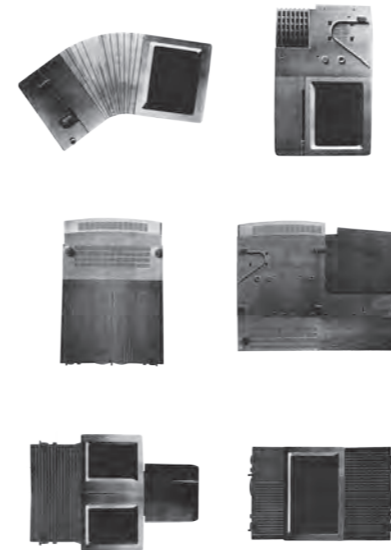
Slip cast stoneware with pigment
12 x 12 x 18.7 cm



[92,109]

New Dawn Fades 2013

Slip cast earthenware with copper oxide slip
15 x 15 x 47 cm
Claridge Collection, Montréal



[93-94]

Untitled (Units I-VI) 1999/2015

Photolithographs on Rives BFK
37.5 x 37.5 cm each



[98-99]

Chimera 2013

Slip cast earthenware with pigmented wax
14.4 x 17 x 33.5 cm
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



[100]

Deus Ex Machina 2013

Slip cast stoneware with tin oxide glaze
13.5 x 7 x 24 cm
Claridge Collection, Montréal



[106]

Xoanon 2013

Press moulded earthenware with sawdust additions and copper oxide slip
20.5 x 12.5 x 38 cm



[101]

You will be hungry again in one hour 2015

Bowl, iron filings
35.5 cm in diameter x 8.8 cm



[107]

Sentinel 2015

Cast hydrostone with aggregate
7.8 x 16 x 23.8 cm



[103]

Hard Edge Kawaii Subtraction No.2 2014

Cast hydrostone with pigmented wax
24 x 24.5 x 31 cm
Majudia Collection, Montréal.



[104,105]

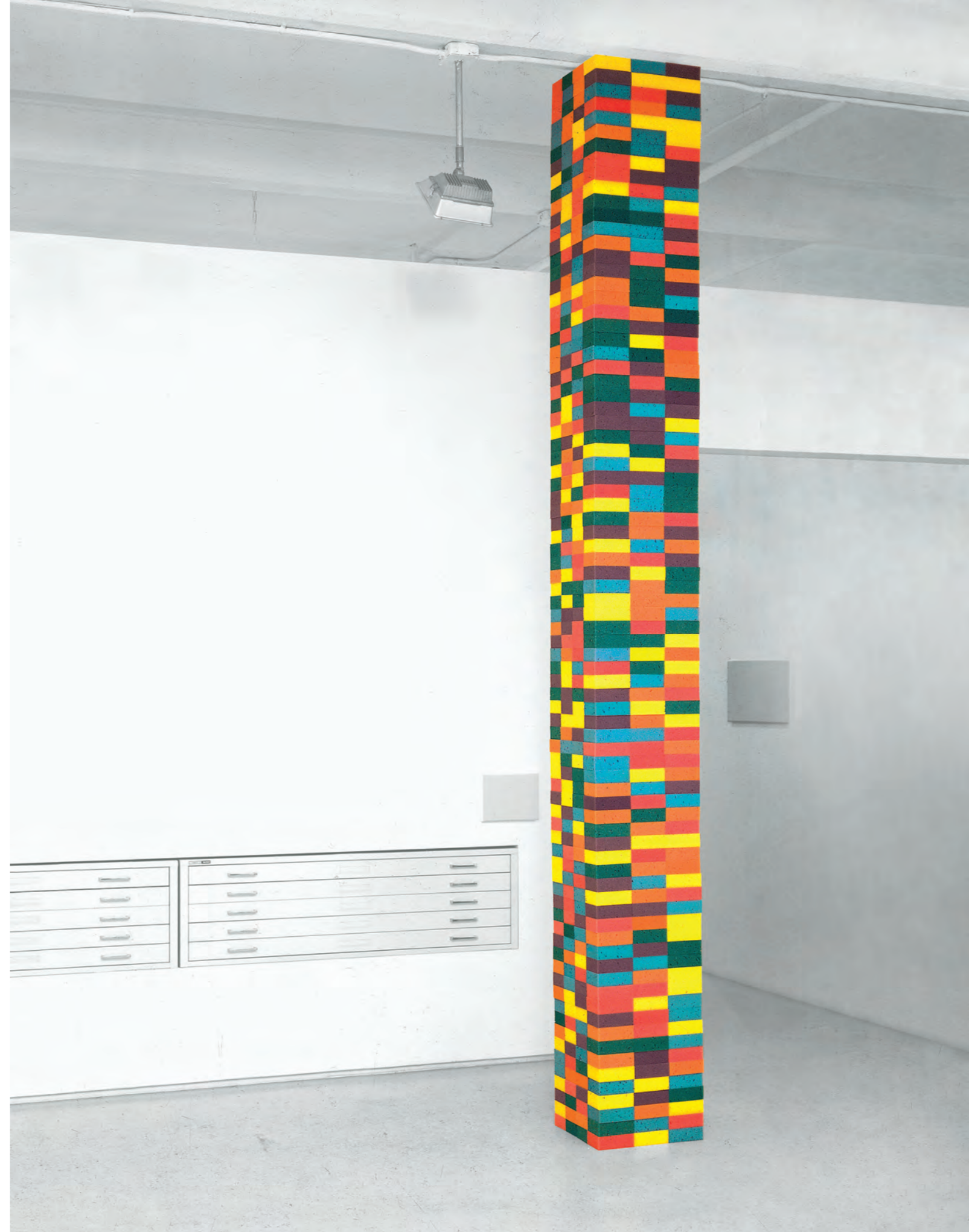
The Trickster 2013
Loki 2014

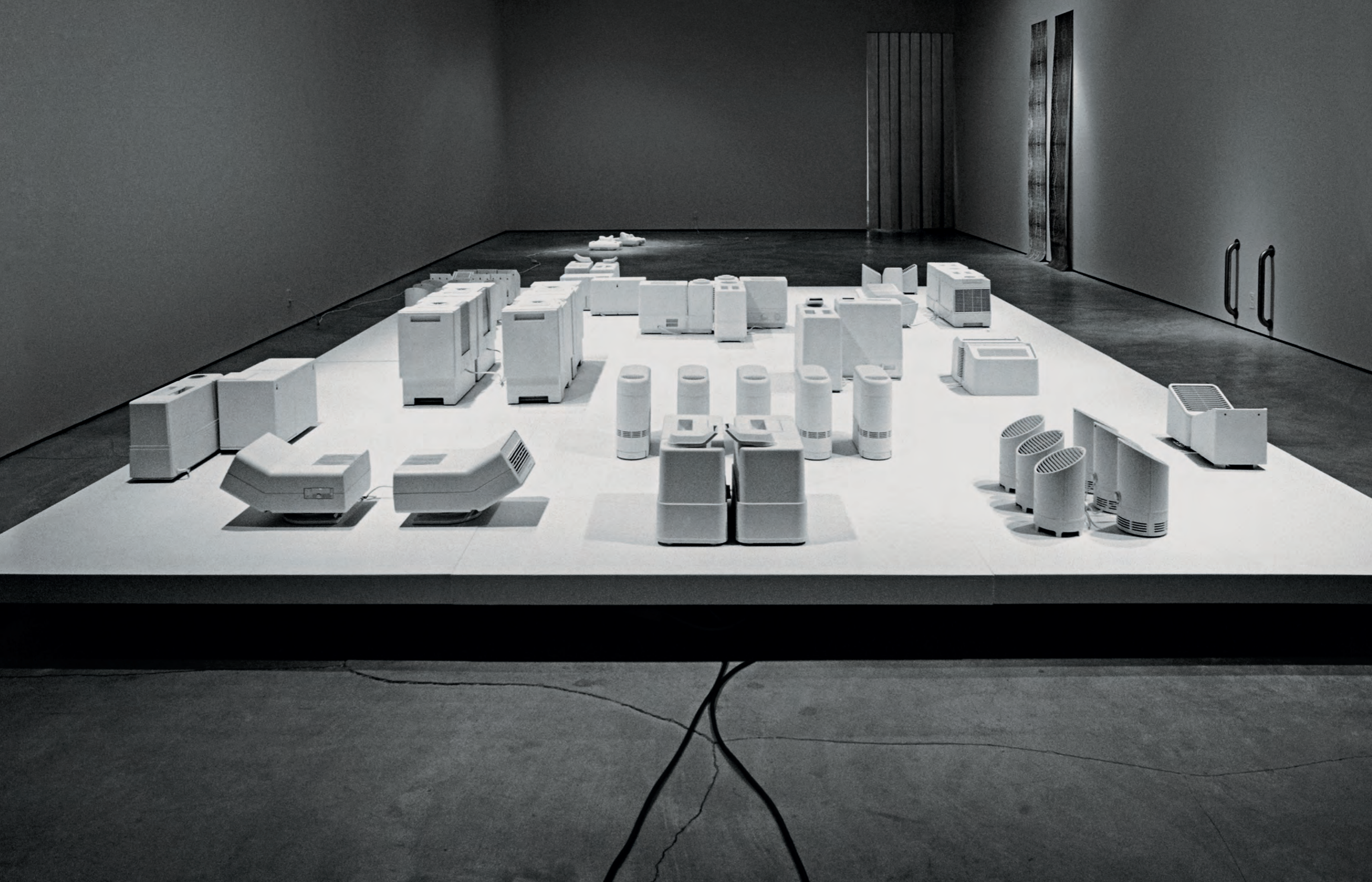
Press moulded stoneware with copper oxide slip
15.5 x 3 x 36.5 cm, 14 x 3 x 29 cm
Raphael Yu Collection, Toronto

- p. 157 *Soft Load* 1999. Foam sponges. 30.5 x 38 x 350.5 cm.
Installation view, *Luster*, Henry Urbach Gallery, New York.
- pp. 158–159 *Airborne* 2000. Air ionisers, ecologisers, humidifiers; 64 units running continuously.
Installation view, *Pathology*, Contemporary Art Gallery (CAG), Vancouver.
- pp. 160–161 FROM LEFT:
Type/Need Objects I, II, III 2001. Silicone rubber, mixed media. Various dimensions.
Exchange 2001. HEPA air purifiers, cords; 56 units running continuously.
Collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA).

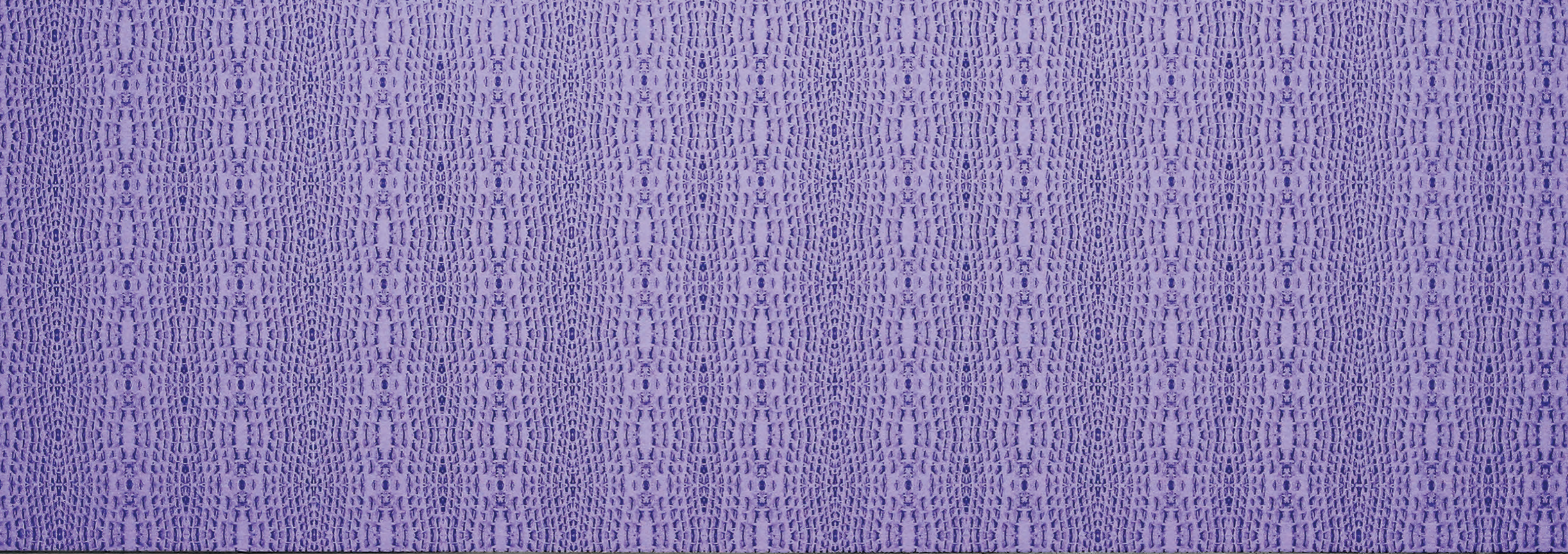
Installation views, *Condition*, Henry Urbach Gallery, New York.
- pp. 162–163 FROM FRONT:
Untitled (Complex II) 2002. Air ionisers, humidifiers, various materials; running continuously.
185.4 x 185.4 x 38 cm.
Pattern Language II: Tantric (mauve) 2002. Lambda print. Variable dimensions.

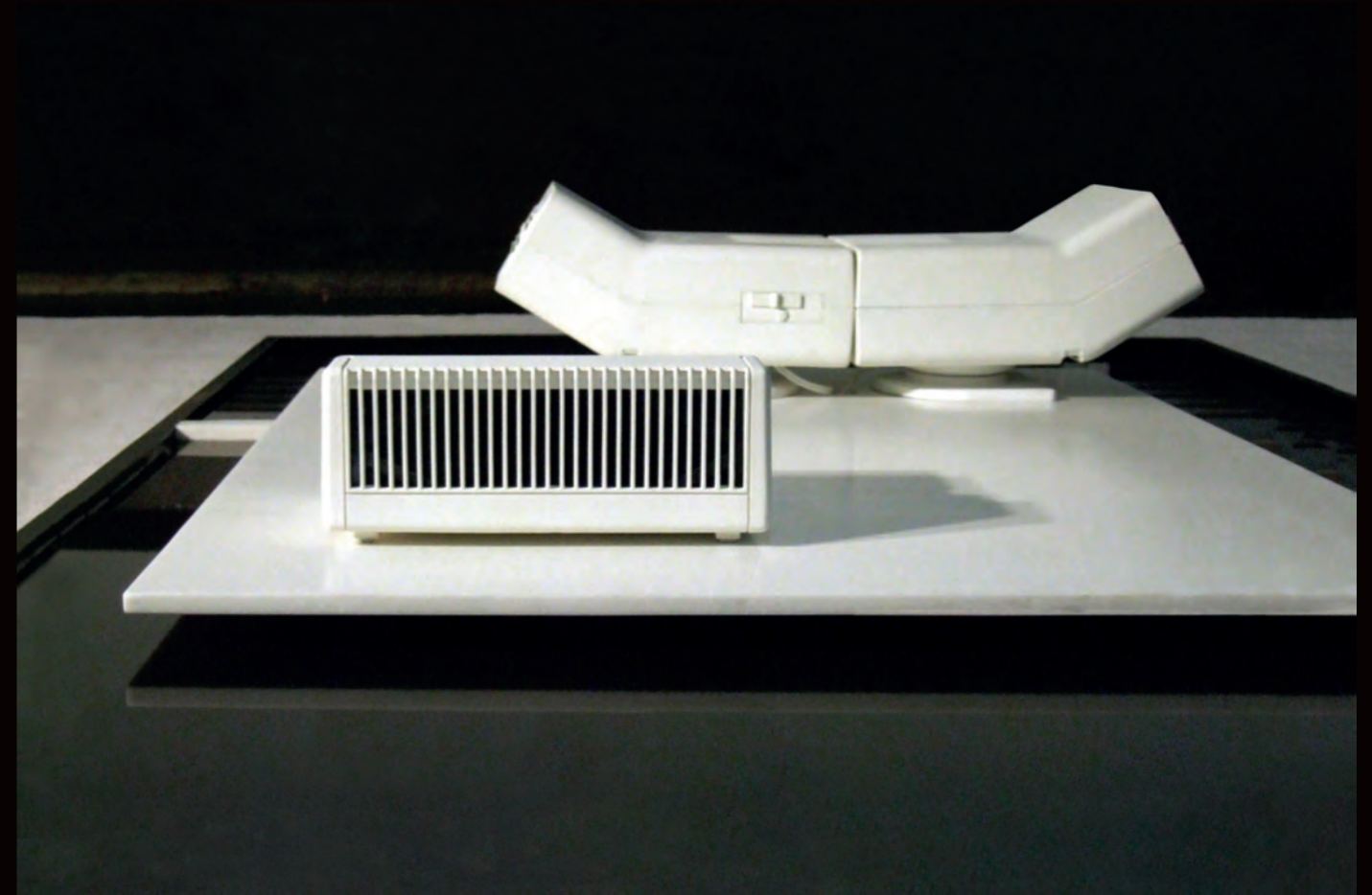
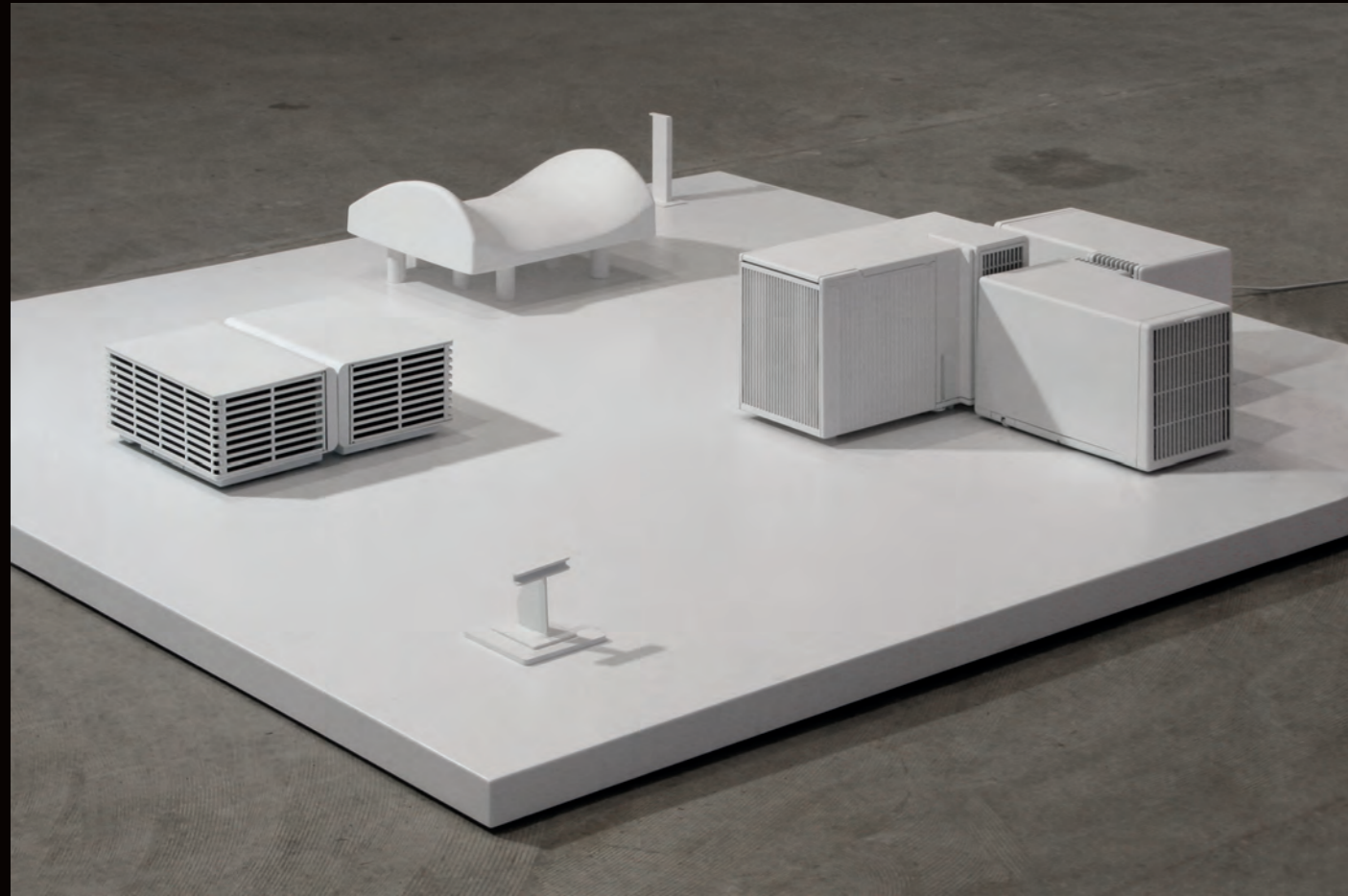
Installation view, *Newmodulr*, Blackwood Gallery, Toronto.
- p. 164 *Untitled (Complex II)* 2002 (detail).
- p. 165 *Untitled (Complex IV)* 2007 (detail). Carpeting, Corian, air sterilisers, distilled water, male and female pheromones, vibrators. 335.3 x 335.3 x 38 cm. Installation view, *Paradox and Practice: Architecture in the Wake of Conceptualism*, UC Irvine Gallery.
- pp. 166–167 *YA* 2003. Lightbox. 122 x 20.3 x 66 cm. Installation view, *mosaicCanada*, Seoul Museum of Art (SEMA).
- pp. 168–169 *No Molestar* 2006. Cotton t-shirts. Installation view, *Street*, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam.
- p. 170 FROM TOP:
Being Disposed (Dasein) and *Being Disposed (Gestell)* 2007. Text on utility boxes. Various dimensions.
Installation views, *Modelle für Morgen*, EU Kunsthalle, Cologne.

















pp. 172–173 FROM LEFT:

Dado (no. 3) and *Dado (no. 4)* 2006/2007. Lack side tables.
Installation view, the artist's studio, Toronto.

pp. 174–175 FROM LEFT:

Reconstruction (I) and *Reconstruction (II)* 2008. C Prints. 113.7 x 113.7 cm each.
Installation view, *Style and Epoch*, Michael Klein Gallery, Toronto.

pp. 176–179 *Cloud* 2008. Air purifiers, ionisers, sterilisers, washers, humidifiers, ozone air cleaners; running continuously. Installation views, *11th Venice Biennale of Architecture*, Venice.
Collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA).

pp. 180–181 *Cloud* 2008. Installation view, *PARAdesign*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA).

pp. 182–185 *Matter* 2008. Closed-circuit surveillance camera, light, airborne particulates, video recorder with delay; two projections over 18 day duration.
Installation views, *Matter*, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin.

pp. 186–187 *Matter* 2008. Still sequences from surveillance camera recording.

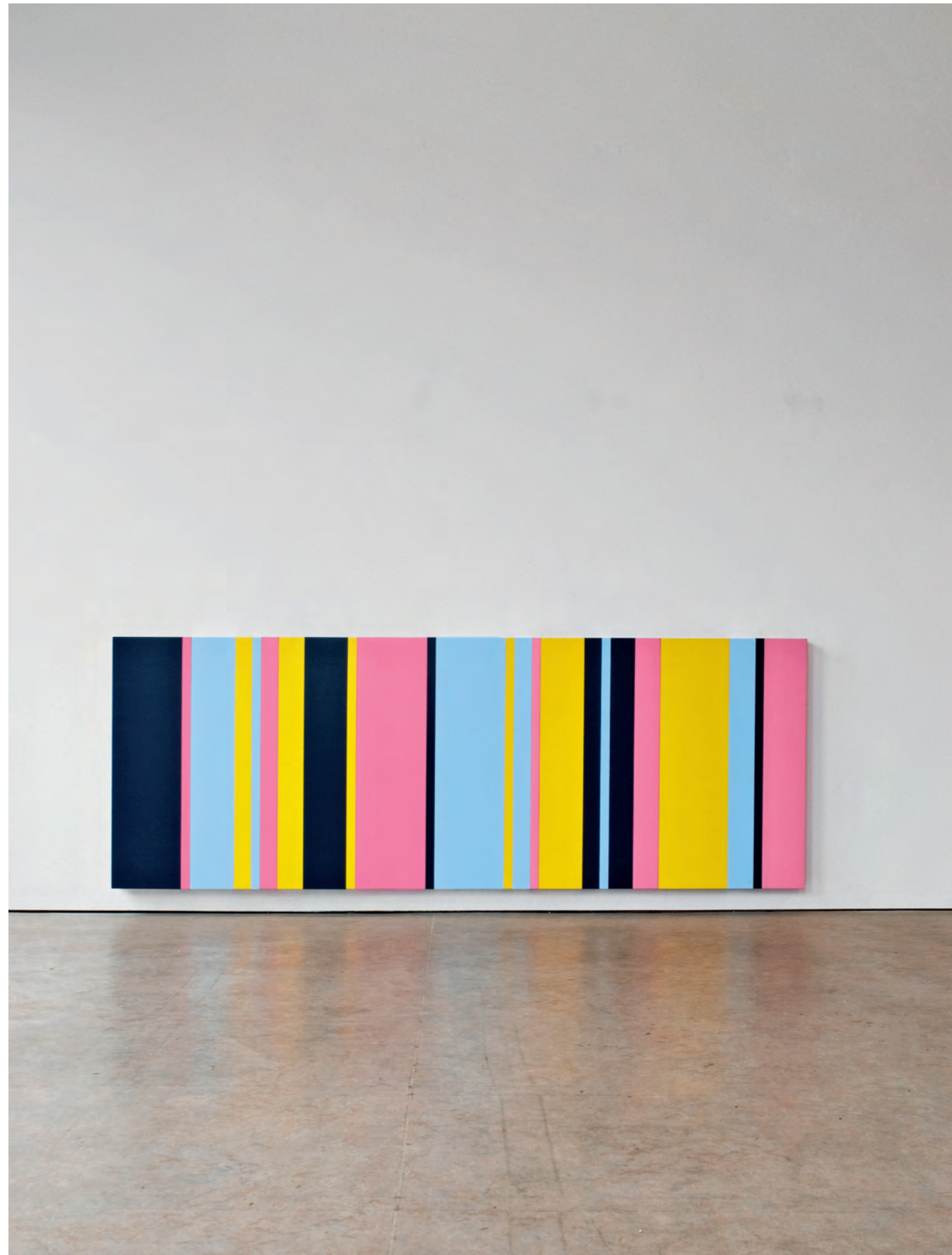
pp. 188–189 *Pattern Language: Levittown (white)* 2007. Silkscreen on paper.
Installation view, *Hier ist Amerika oder Nirgends*, Galerie Ben Kaufmann, Berlin.
Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.

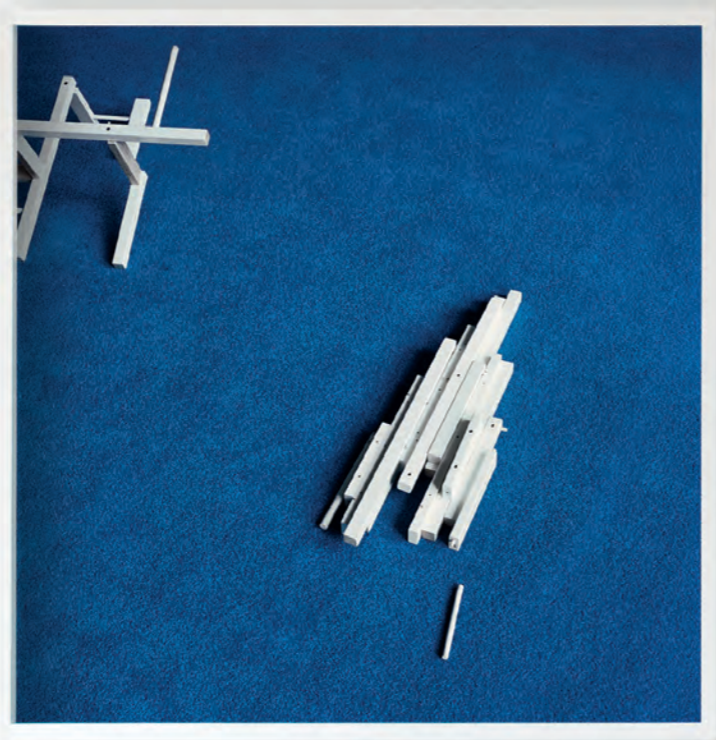
pp. 190–191 *Title Deed* 2009. Suburban home, latex block filler, paint.
Installation view, *The Leona Drive Project*, Willowdale.

p. 192 FROM TOP:

Title Deed 2009. Pre-installation view.

Title Deed 2009. Installation view, *The Leona Drive Project*, Willowdale.

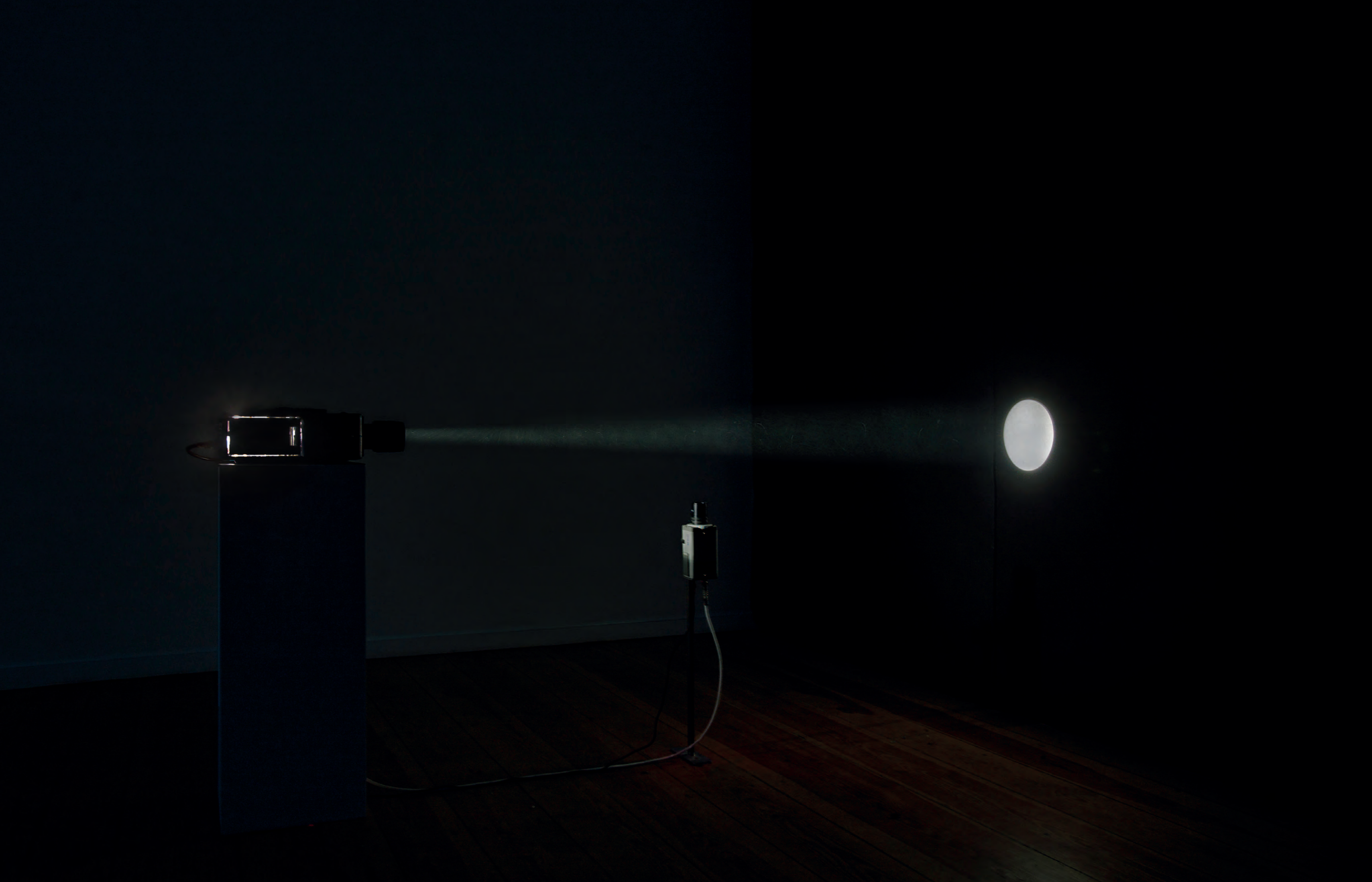




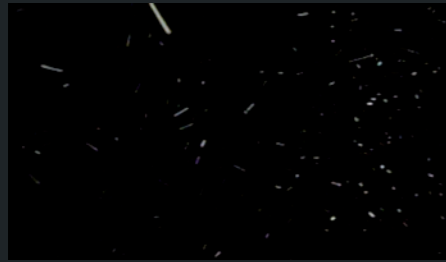












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19.09.2008
01:27:58.29



19.09.2008
01:27:59.11



19.09.2008
01:27:59.21



19.09.2008
01:28:00.03



19.09.2008
01:28:00.13



19.09.2008
01:28:00.23



19.09.2008
01:28:01.05



19.09.2008
01:28:01.15



19.09.2008
01:28:01.25



19.09.2008
01:28:02.07



19.09.2008
01:28:02.17



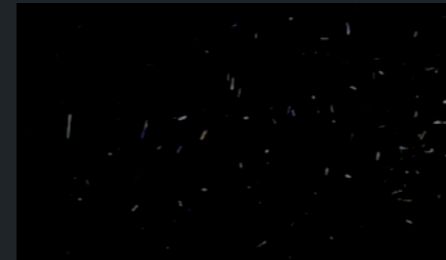
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19.09.2008
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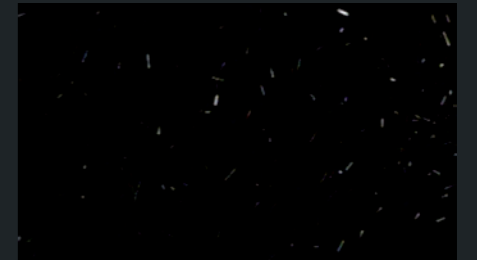
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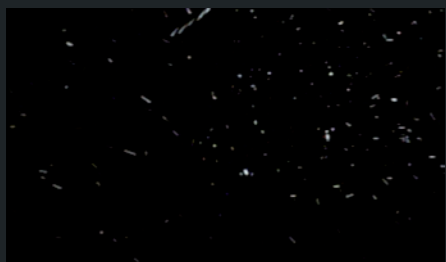
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19.09.2008
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19.09.2008
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27.09.2008
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27.09.2008
14:36:11.20



27.09.2008
14:36:12.02



27.09.2008
14:36:12.12



27.09.2008
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27.09.2008
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27.09.2008
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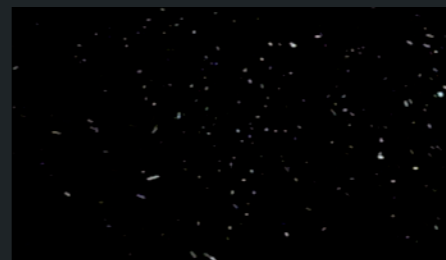
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14:36:14.06



27.09.2008
14:36:14.16



27.09.2008
14:36:14.28



27.09.2008
14:36:15.08







pp. 194–195 *Ennui Blanc* 2010. Neon sign. 378 x 30 cm. Installation view, *Out of Site*, Toronto. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO).

pp. 196–199 *Fantasia in 24 Gauge* 2011. Brass, sheet metal, mirrored acrylic, glass. 213.3 x 213.3 x 213.3 cm. Installation views, *Hyper Spaces*, Oakville Galleries.

pp. 200–202 *BLAST* 2011. Various materials. Installation views, *BLAST*, Michael Klein Gallery, Toronto.

p. 203 *White Dwarf* 2012. Various materials. Installation view, the artist's studio, Toronto.

pp. 204–205 *White Dwarf* 2012. Installation view, *Museum for the End of the World*, Nuit Blanche, Toronto.

pp. 206–207 FROM LEFT:

Obsolete Figure in Space 2013. Slip cast earthenware with copper oxide slip. Collection of the National Gallery of Art, Ottawa.

Aphros 2013. Press moulded earthenware with sawdust additions, copper oxide slip, pigment. Collection of the National Gallery of Art, Ottawa.

Order of Solids 2013. Slip cast earthenware. Collection of the National Gallery of Art, Ottawa.

Gnomon 2013. Cast plaster with pigmented wax. Collection of the National Gallery of Art, Ottawa.

Chimera 2013. Slip cast earthenware with pigmented wax. Collection of the National Gallery of Art, Ottawa.

pp. 208–209 FROM LEFT:

Mono a Mono I 2013. Slip cast stoneware with iron-based glaze, three parts.

Peregrine Slip 2013. Slip cast stoneware with iron-based glaze.

Cell 2013. Slip cast earthenware with pigmented wax.

Hodos 2013. Slab-built stoneware with nickel oxide glaze.

Deus Ex Machina 2013. Slip cast stoneware with tin oxide glaze. Claridge Collection, Montréal.

The Trickster 2013. Press moulded stoneware with copper oxide slip. Raphael Yu Collection, Toronto.

Brutalist Rice Cooker 2013. Slip cast stoneware with overglaze pigmentation. Raphael Yu Collection, Toronto.

Enigmatic Depression 2013. Slip cast earthenware with pigmented wax.

Lacuna 2013. Slip cast earthenware with iron-based glaze.

Installation views (pp. 206–209), *MONO NO MA*, Gardiner Museum, Toronto.

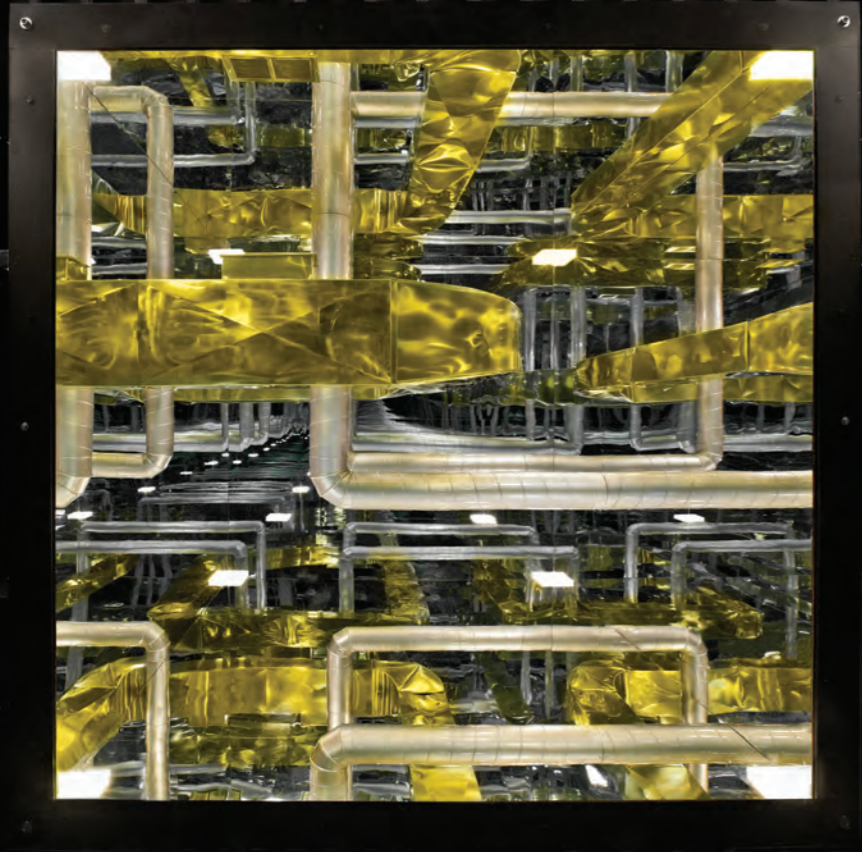
p. 210 Installation view, the artist's studio, Toronto.

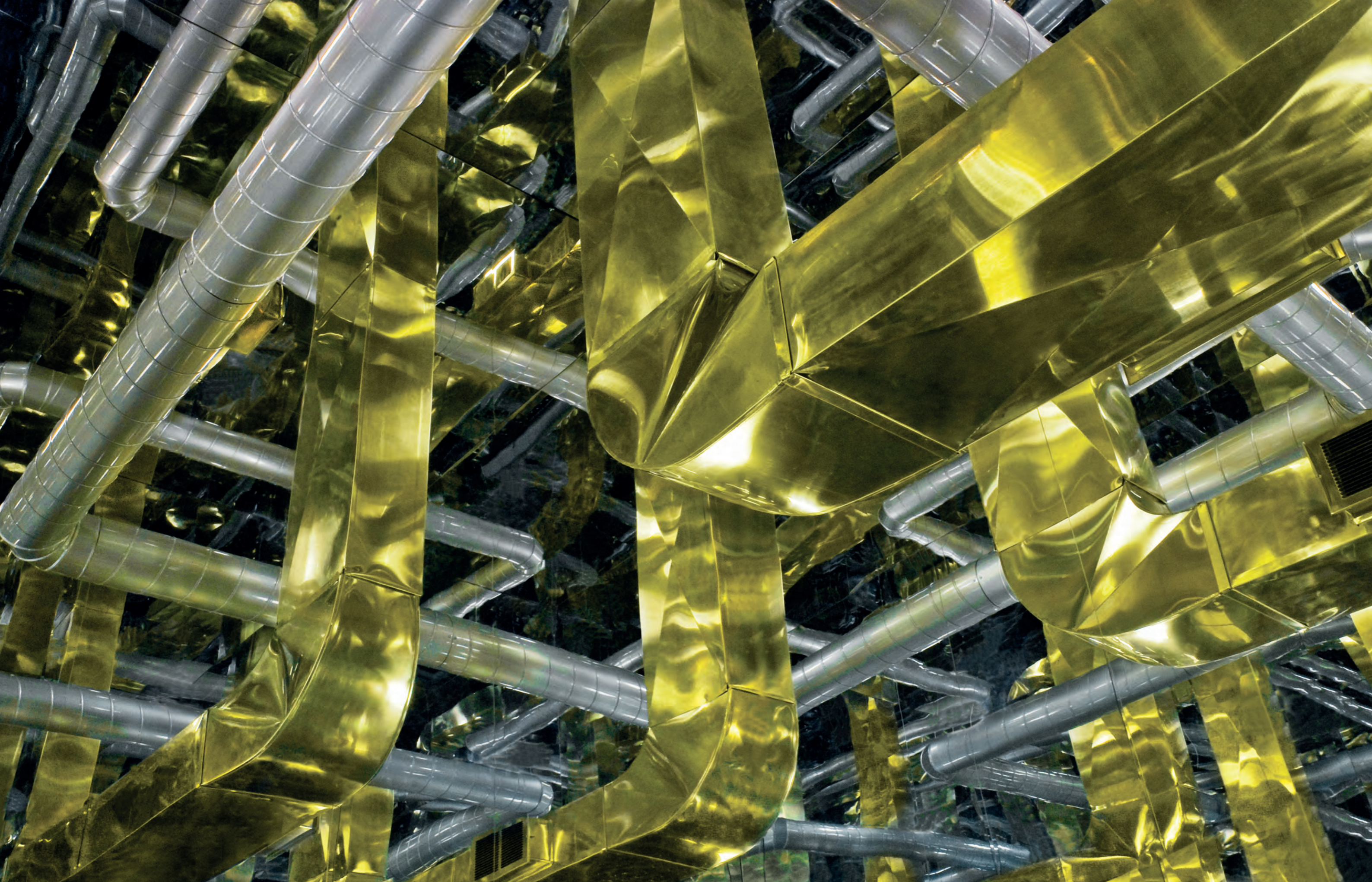


ENNUI BLANC

Fashion Coles

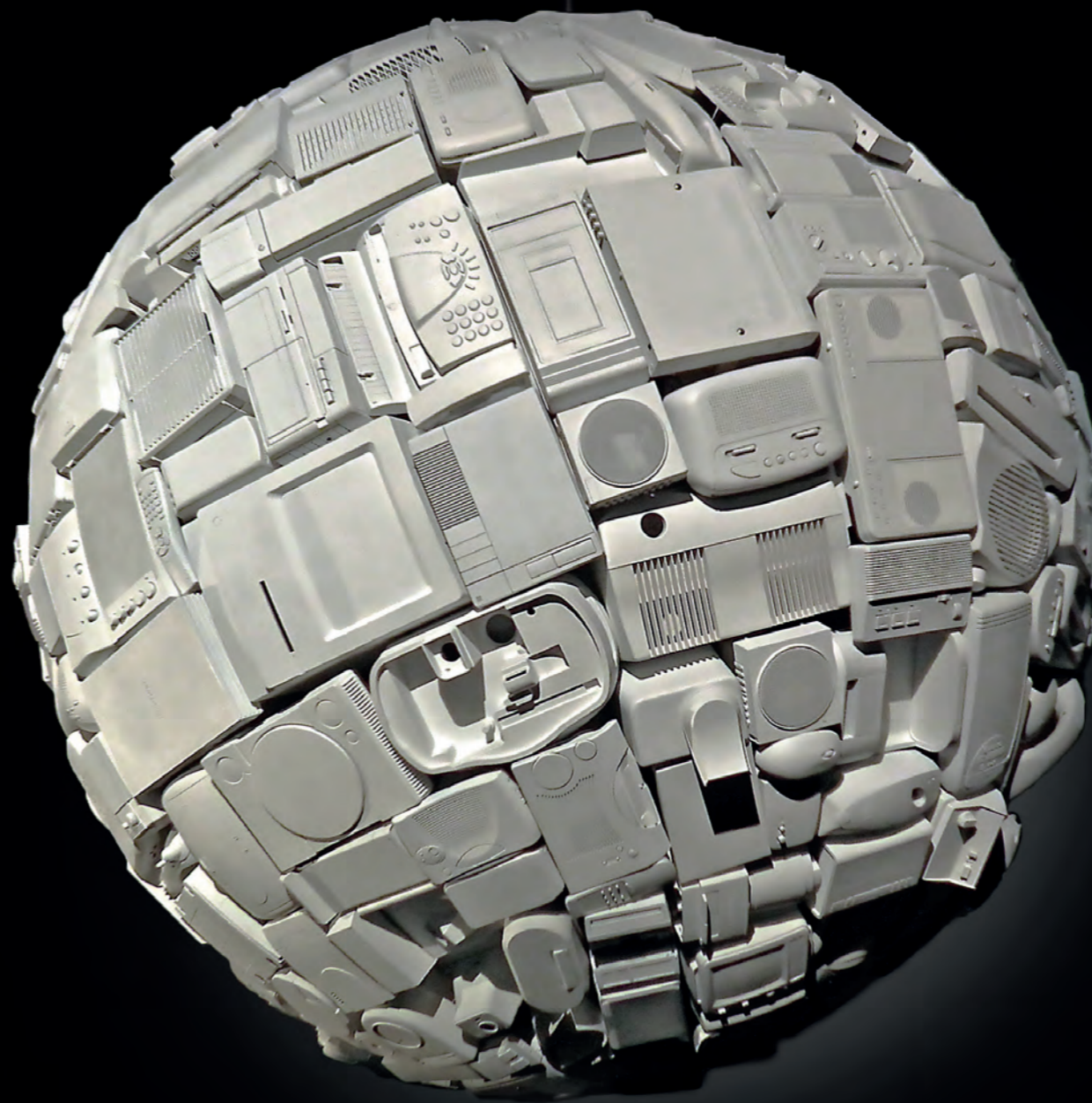
Fashion Coles

















p. 213 FROM LEFT:

Formation IV 2014. Slip cast stoneware with pigment.

Formation V 2014. Slip cast stoneware with pigment.

Formation III 2014. Slip cast stoneware with grey slip and manganese dioxide.

Formation I-I 2014 and *Formation II-I* 2014. Slip cast stoneware with black slip.

Delivery System 2013. Slip cast stoneware with tin oxide glaze.

The Trickster 2013 and *Loki* 2014. Press moulded stoneware with copper oxide slip.

pp. 214–215 FROM LEFT:

Untitled (Units I-VI) 1999. Photocollages. 37.5 x 37.5 cm each.

Tropos II/II/I (for Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven) 2014. Cast concrete with patina.

Tropos I/I/I (for Djuna Barnes) 2014. Cast hydrostone with pigmented wax.

Tropos III/III/I (for Gertrude Stein) 2014. Cast hydrostone with pigmented wax.

pp. 216–217 FROM LEFT:

Hard Edge Kawaii Subtraction No.2 2014. Cast hydrostone with pigmented wax.

Brutalist Rice Cooker 2013. Slip cast stoneware with overglaze pigmentation. Claridge Collection, Montréal.

Son of Cong 2015. Slip cast stoneware with overglaze pigmentation. Claridge Collection, Montréal.

Apbros 2014. Cast concrete with patina.

Cell 2013. Slip cast earthenware with pigmented wax.

Mono a Mono I 2013. Slip cast stoneware with iron-based glaze; three parts.

Ruin 2014. Slip cast earthenware with pigmented wax.

Gnomon 2013. Cast plaster with pigmented wax.

Installation views (pp. 213-217), *An Tè Liu—In Absentia*, Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery (KWAG).

pp. 218–219 *Agenda 2000-2009* 2011. Letterpress on Strathmore, set of ten prints.

pp. 220–221 FROM LEFT:

Hard Edge Kawaii Subtraction No.2 2014. Cast hydrostone with pigmented wax. Majudia Collection, Montréal.

Tropos III/I/I (for Gertrude Stein) 2015. Cast hydrostone with patina. 10 x 13 x 120 cm.

Tropos I/I/I (for Djuna Barnes) 2015. Cast concrete with patina. 17 x 20 x 192 cm.

Tropos IV/III/I (for Mina Loy) 2015. Cast hydrostone with patina. 30.5 x 30.5 x 231 cm.

Apbros 2014. Cast concrete with patina.

Gnomon 2014. Cast bronze. 16 x 15.5 x 180 cm. Claridge Collection, Montréal.

Installation view, *An Tè Liu—Des bribes et des morceaux*, Galerie Division, Montréal.

pp. 222–223 FROM LEFT:

Eidolon III-IV 2015. Slip cast earthenware with red and black terra sigilata. 16 x 11 x 22 cm.

Eidolon II-III 2015. Slip cast stoneware with copper-based glaze. 10 x 7 x 17 cm.

Eidolon VI-II 2015. Slip cast stoneware with black slip. 17 x 14 x 32 cm.

Eidolon I-III 2015. Slip cast stoneware with red terra sigilata and pigmented wax. 10 x 7 x 15 cm.

Eidolon VII-II 2015. Slip cast earthenware with chestnut slip and pigmented wax. 21 x 15 x 33 cm.

Eidolon IV-II 2015. Slip cast stoneware with iron-based glaze. 10 x 7 x 17 cm.

Eidolon V-II 2015. Slip cast earthenware with red and black terra sigilata. 9 x 13.5 x 21 cm.

pp. 224–225 FROM LEFT:

Enigmatic Depression 2013. Slip cast earthenware with pigmented wax.

Ruin 2014. Slip cast earthenware with pigmented wax.

New Dawn Fades 2013. Slip cast earthenware with copper oxide slip. Claridge Collection, Montréal.

Sentinel 2015. Cast hydrostone with aggregate.

Hodos 2013. Slab-built stoneware with nickel oxide glaze. Claridge Collection, Montréal.

Solid State 2014. Cast plaster with pigmented wax.

Installation views (pp. 222–225), *An Tè Liu—Des bribes et des morceaux*, Galerie Division, Montréal.

pp. 226–227 FROM LEFT:

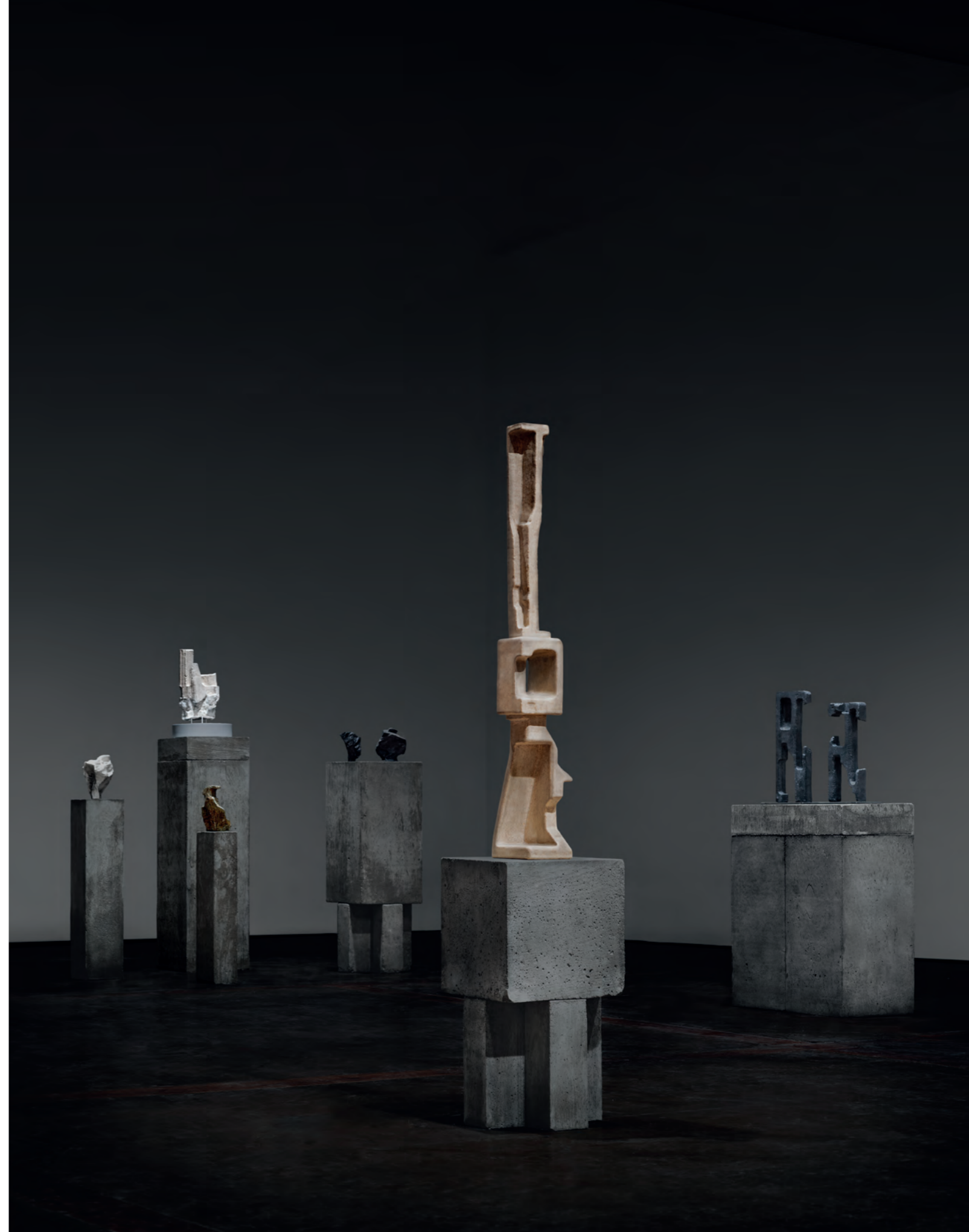
Formation IV 2014. Slip cast stoneware with pigment.

Formation III 2014. Slip cast stoneware with grey slip and manganese dioxide.

Formation V 2014. Slip cast stoneware with pigment.

Formation I-I 2014 and *Formation II-I* 2014. Slip cast stoneware with black slip.

pp. 228–229 *EROS* 2013. Lightbox. 193 x 20.3 x 66 cm.







一、 凡我同胞，
如有不肖之徒，
敢於破壞國家，
或損害名譽者，
定必嚴懲不貸，
以儆效尤。

二、 凡我同胞，
如有不肖之徒，
敢於破壞國家，
或損害名譽者，
定必嚴懲不貸，
以儆效尤。

三、 凡我同胞，
如有不肖之徒，
敢於破壞國家，
或損害名譽者，
定必嚴懲不貸，
以儆效尤。

四、 凡我同胞，
如有不肖之徒，
敢於破壞國家，
或損害名譽者，
定必嚴懲不貸，
以儆效尤。

五、 凡我同胞，
如有不肖之徒，
敢於破壞國家，
或損害名譽者，
定必嚴懲不貸，
以儆效尤。

六、 凡我同胞，
如有不肖之徒，
敢於破壞國家，
或損害名譽者，
定必嚴懲不貸，
以儆效尤。

七、 凡我同胞，
如有不肖之徒，
敢於破壞國家，
或損害名譽者，
定必嚴懲不貸，
以儆效尤。

八、 凡我同胞，
如有不肖之徒，
敢於破壞國家，
或損害名譽者，
定必嚴懲不貸，
以儆效尤。

九、 凡我同胞，
如有不肖之徒，
敢於破壞國家，
或損害名譽者，
定必嚴懲不貸，
以儆效尤。

十、 凡我同胞，
如有不肖之徒，
敢於破壞國家，
或損害名譽者，
定必嚴懲不貸，
以儆效尤。











←EROS→

BIOGRAPHY

1967 Tainan, Taiwan

Honours B.A., Fine Art History, Renaissance Studies, Victoria College, University of Toronto (1990)

M. Arch., Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-ARC), Los Angeles (1995)

Artist in Residence, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2007-8)

Professor, Daniels Faculty, University of Toronto

EXHIBITIONS

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2015 *An Te Liu—Des bribes et des morceaux*, Galerie Division, Montréal
An Te Liu—Solid States, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (MOCCA) at Toronto Sculpture Garden
- 2014–15 *An Te Liu—In Absentia*, Southern Alberta Art Gallery (SAAG), Lethbridge, Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery (KWAG), Art Gallery of Grande Prairie (AGGP)
- 2014 *An Te Liu—The Knowing Nothing of the Thing*, Art Labor Gallery, Shanghai (cat.)
- 2013 *MONO NO MA*, Gardiner Museum, Toronto (cat.)
Recodings, Bulthaup, Toronto
- 2012 *BLAST*, Allen Lambert Galleria, Brookfield Place, Toronto
- 2011 *Lost in Transaction*, No. 9 Contemporary Art at Pearson Airport, Toronto
BLAST, Michael Klein Gallery, Toronto
- 2009 *Pook X Pookie*, SCI-Arc Gallery, Los Angeles
- 2008 *Matter*, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin
Style and Epoch, Michael Klein Gallery, Toronto
- 2007 *Ether*, The News at Five, Toronto International Art Fair
- 2004 *Tackiness and Anti-Power*, Artists Space, New York
Ether, Mercer Union, Toronto
- 2001 *Condition*, Henry Urbach Gallery, New York
- 2000 *Pathology*, Contemporary Art Gallery (CAG), Vancouver

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2015 *Contrastes*, Arsenal, Montréal
Stories Told, O'Born Contemporary, Toronto
- 2014–15 *Shine a Light: 2014 Canadian Biennial*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (cat.)
Suburbia—A Model Life, Art Gallery of Alberta (AGA), Edmonton
- 2014 *Der Brancusi Effekt*, Kunsthalle Vienna (cat.)
Casting The Negative, Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto
- 2013 *Airport Landscape*, Harvard GSD, Cambridge
To Be Small or To Have Presents, Stichtung SEA Foundation, Tilburg
- 2012 *Museum for the End of the World*, Nuit Blanche 2012, Toronto
Collection Tedeschi, Parisian Laundry, Montréal
Art in the Parking Lot, LAXART, Los Angeles
Local Color, San Jose Museum of Art
Full Circle, WORKShop, Toronto
- 2011 *The More Things Change*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA)
PARAdesign, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA)
Hyper Spaces, Oakville Galleries, Oakville
Place, Toronto International Art Fair

- 2010 *Empire of Dreams*, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (mocca), Toronto (cat.)
Out of Site, Nuit Blanche, Toronto
Everything Must Go, Toronto International Art Fair
Colour Shift, CODE Screen 2010, Vancouver
- 2009 *The Leona Drive Project*, Willowdale (cat.)
EVA International—Ireland Biennial of Contemporary Art, Limerick (cat.)
Fremtidens arkitektur er grøn!, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk (cat.)
Exhibition, Exhibition 211, New York
Two in One, Christie's, Amsterdam
Transclimatic, Sydney Customs House (cat.)
- 2008 *11th Venice Biennale of Architecture—Out There: Architecture Beyond Building*, Venice (cat.)
Hier ist Amerika oder Nirgends, Galerie Ben Kaufmann / Art Berlin Contemporary (ABC), Berlin (cat.)
246 and Counting, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (sfmoma)
Figuration in Contemporary Design, Art Institute of Chicago (cat.)
- 2007 *Modelle für Morgen: Köln*, European Kunsthalle, Cologne
Pattern Theory, Michael Klein Gallery, Toronto
Paradox and Practice: Architecture in the Wake of Conceptualism, UCI Art Gallery, Irvine (cat.)
- 2006 *Street*, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam
Sense of the City, Centre Canadien d'Architecture (CCA), Montréal (cat.)
- 2005 *Therefore Beautiful*, Ursula Blickle Stiftung, Kraichtal (cat.)
Airborne, Henry Urbach Gallery, New York
Re: Building the World, Edmonton Art Gallery
- 2004 *A.C.*, Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York
Domestic Odyssey, San Jose Museum of Art (cat.)
Ziploc, Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, Guelph
- 2003 *mosaiCanada: Sign and Sound*, Seoul Museum of Art (sema) (cat.)
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