

## **James Lewis (b.1986, South London, UK)**

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Lewis' sculptures and installations respond to the pervasive cognitive dissonance that permeates our quotidian lives, as social and political intricacies are often distilled into statistical data, measurements of time, percentiles, and rigid categorisations. At the core of his artistic practice is an exploration of the empirical boundaries that shape our comprehension of the intricate interplay between humans, animals, and objects. Through this, he challenges the confines that limit our engagement with a given environment, inviting viewers to reconsider their perspectives and question the established norms that govern our perception of reality.

He has exhibited at internationally renowned institutions including; Leopold Museum, Austria (2024); Mostyn, Wales (2022); Kunstverein Salzburg, Austria (2022); Fondazione Benetton, Treviso, Italy (2022); Capc Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, France (2021)

He completed his studies within the Fine Art Department at the Royal College of Art in London (2010 - 2012) and has taught at The University of Applied Arts, Vienna; The Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna; Leeds University, UK; Norwich School of Art, UK; Kingston University, UK; Paris College of Art, Paris, France; and is currently a Lecturer in Fine Art at AVU, Prague, Czech Republic and an Associate Mentor at Conditions, an artist studio complex in his hometown Croydon, UK.

## Living Stone

### Solo exhibition, Pech, Vienna

Notes, transcripts, doodles: it is common to court these marginalia as minutes, as these pertain to the transcribed traces of our statistical experience. Implied is a lot of dead time, dead-ends, marked by clocking in and out, calling, tracing, marking, and re-marking, as it were. Themes of stagnation simmer in petri-dishes, which we are asked to watch like television: enlarged, scaled-up insignia of the real. Life becomes TV static swimming at the atomic scale inside of us.

'Time' comes up in my notes 237 times.

Time, as in: statistical time, markers of time; phones going ring ring, phone numbers, calls with no caller ID, cut lines, power-outs, dial signals. I think about telephone-related movie tropes. But then there is time, also, that rings in alarm clocks, death knells, keypad sounds, ring tones. Trains and planes, arrivals and departures, flight paths, best laid plans, and lines of navigation. I get stuck on the notion of the lines of 'tropic' as a curious marker of time, and space, inverted across the globe.

Two idioms:

*Midnight is only dissimulated noon.*

and

*Night is the winter of the tropics.*

I keep thinking about the tropics in winter, and dissimulated midnight, the night of the tropics, the everything that traverses the globe in latitudes and longitudes, measuring distances and sensations.

That is, our attempt to capture, count, and measure everything—even the ruptures.

Impatient time trying to grasp the slowness of space.

James adds to the list:

Masturbating: 6177600 seconds  
Watching TV: 289749600 seconds  
Cleaning: 46425600 seconds  
Driving: 136566000 seconds  
Sex: 10108800 seconds  
Working: 324000000 seconds  
Sleeping: 827859600 seconds  
Eating: 115552800 seconds  
Showering: 43200000 seconds  
Toilet: 7948800 seconds



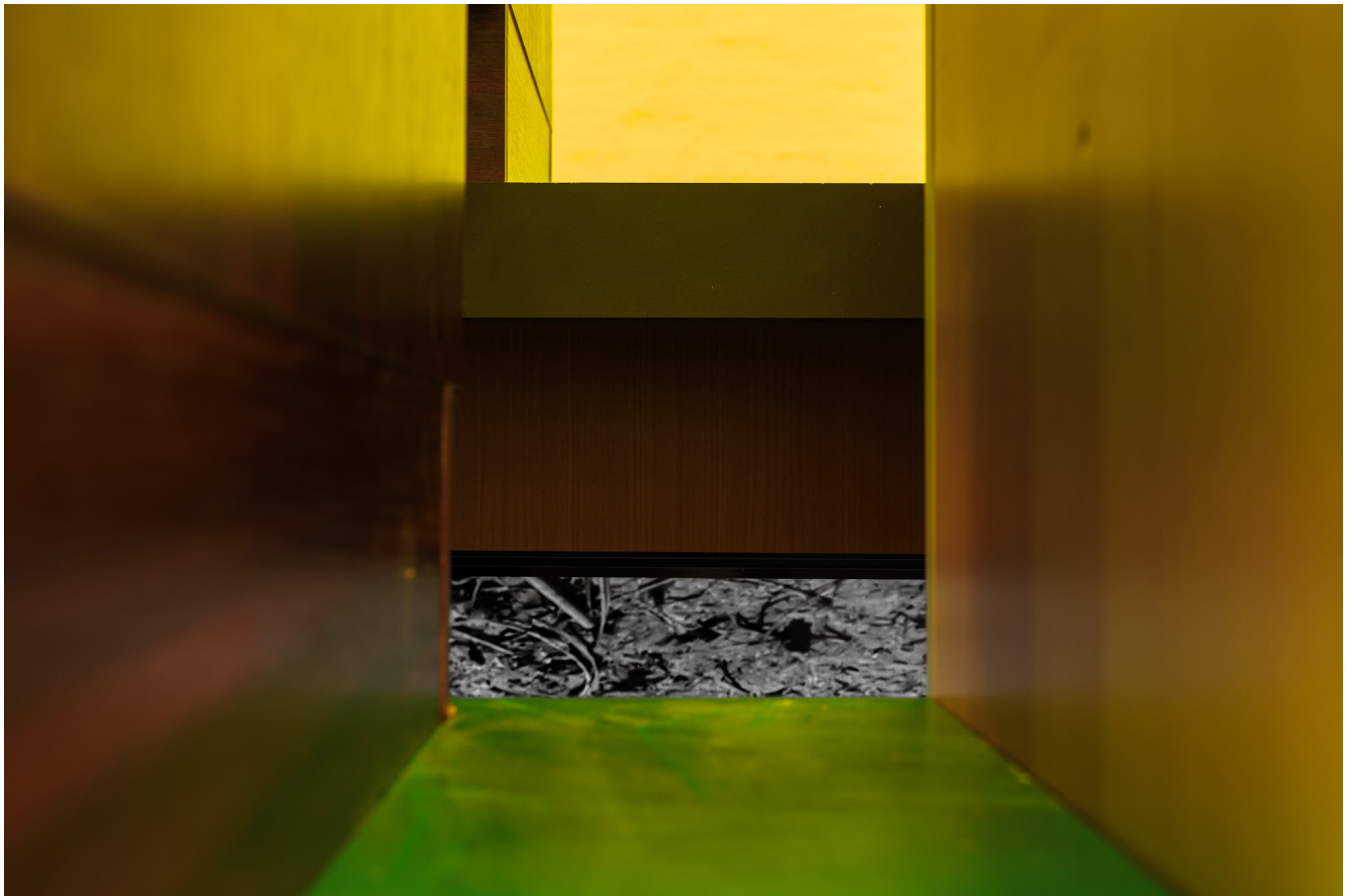
**Top:** *Living Stone* (installation view)  
Solo exhibition, Pech, Vienna





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Link to extract: <https://tinyurl.com/47tptchf>



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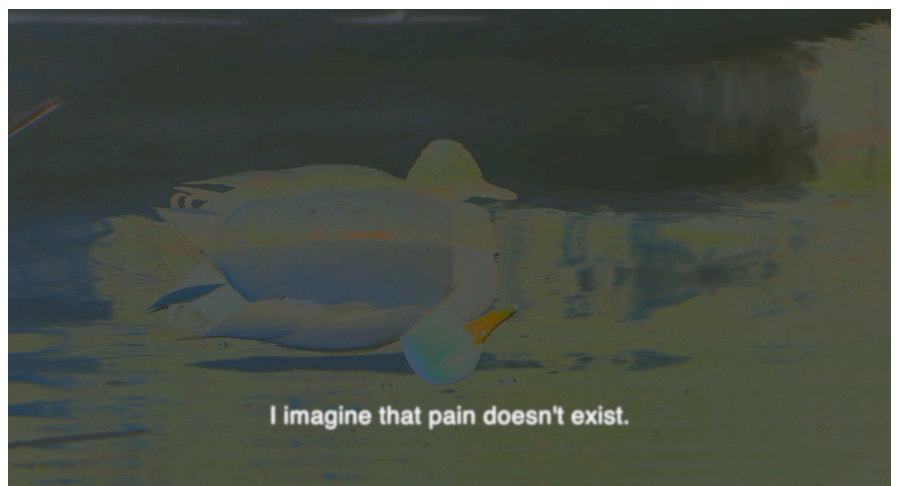


**Top:** *Transferring Domain* (installation view)  
Group exhibition, Nir Altman, Munich



**Top:** *Transferring Domain* (installation view)  
Group exhibition, Nir Altman, Munich

Link to extract: <https://tinyurl.com/4pztksb>



Top: *Duck Days*, 2024  
HD Video, 04:34:20

Link to extract: <https://tinyurl.com/4pztksb>





**Top:** *Transferring Domain* (installation view)  
Group exhibition, Nir Altman, Munich



**Top:** *Frieze London, Focus Section* (installation view)  
Stand H20 w/ Nir Altman, Munich





**Top:** *Frieze London, Focus Section* (installation view)  
Stand H20 w/ Nir Altman, Munich



**Top:** *Sediment*, 2023  
Wood, steel, plaster bandage, concrete, glass, whiskey  
254 cm x 140 cm x 92 cm





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254 cm x 140 cm x 92 cm



**Top:** *Sediment*, 2023  
Wood, steel, plaster bandage, concrete, glass, whiskey  
254 cm x 140 cm x 92 cm





**Top:** *Two Branches* (1681985542 seconds, 1710386798 seconds, *Einkorn*, 1713542494 seconds, 1726165274 seconds), 2023  
Wood, steel, plaster bandage, concrete, plexiglass, plastic, glass, resin, pewter, dried leaves  
193 cm x 92 cm x 18 cm





**Top left and right:** *Two Branches* (1681985542 seconds, 1710386798 seconds, *Einkorn*, 1713542494 seconds, 1726165274 seconds), 2023 (details)  
Wood, steel, plaster bandage, concrete, plexiglass, plastic, glass, resin, pewter, dried leaves  
193 cm x 92 cm x 18 cm





**Top:** *Two Branches (Snuppy, Dolly, CopyCat, Prometea)*, 2023  
Wood, steel, plaster bandage, concrete, plexiglass, plastic, glass,  
resin, pewter, dried leaves  
184 cm x 92 cm x 18 cm





**Top:** *Two Branches (Sawmill River, Wien River, Sunswick Creek, River Westbourne)*, 2023

Wood, steel, plaster bandage, concrete, plexiglass, plastic, glass, resin, pewter, dried leaves

184 cm x 92 cm x 18 cm

## Ruderal

### Solo exhibition, Nir Altman, Munich

James Lewis' solo exhibition *Ruderal* at Nir Altman is rooted in a sensitive environmental awareness. Like flowers turning to the sun, free-standing sculptures peer at passersby through the gallery's street-level storefront window. A yellow PVC curtain along the window separates outside and inside. It evokes the shrink wrapped vegetables in supermarket shelves. It's unclear whether the onlookers on the outside or the sculptures on the inside are the packed, protected goods and whether the foil contains or emits the acidic ambient haze that illuminates both sides of the window.

Outside and inside are linked through electrical switch cases in the curtain. They are differently labeled and each offer two options, perhaps recalling the omnipresent two button meme. Illustrating the agony of choice in an intense state of insecurity, it features a comic character attempting to push one of two red buttons labeled with interchangeable or contradicting statements. This frames Lewis' concern with datafied reality, here proposed as alternating states that can be turned off and on at will.

Most people know that statistics are wrong the minute they are made, but what other ways are there to relate to the world? 47% of people believe in fate.<sup>1</sup> Facing a wasteland of information that can't be controlled, channeled or processed by human capacities – switch on probability. Enjoy the ride. 274 km/ h is the average speed of nerve impulses.<sup>2</sup> Your portal to manifest thoughts into one of the probable realities behind the curtain. We used to have skin in this game. Consider the average surface area of skin is 22sq/ft<sup>3</sup> – our barrier to the world, growing thick.

Lewis' ruderal flowers shaped into forms of hanging branches have developed a thick skin, layers and layers of cells. Their stiff bodies demonstrate vitality and vulnerability at the same time. Manufactured from concrete, a building material, the flowers seem to have grown from the debris of human construction and simultaneous environmental destruction. Plantlife lives through exchange and these species endure although the gardener has failed to recognise the interconnectedness of living things. They coexist with the hum of an electrical light which, although invisible, insists on its material textures. Composed of archived sounds sourced from a sample library of field recordings, it repeats the commitment of stacking and layering fragments of repurposed material. This is perhaps how we will remember the world outside - canned and classified. A strange simulation.

Text by Sarah Johanna Theurer, Curator, Haus der Kunst, Munich

<sup>1</sup> What do people believe in? Available at: <https://www.bmgresearch.co.uk/british-public-reveal-beliefs-new-survey/>

<sup>2</sup> 99 Quick and Fascinating Facts About the Human Body Available at: <https://brightside.me/wonder-curiosities/99-quick-and-fascinating-facts-about-the-human-body-38305/>

<sup>3</sup> 99 Quick and Fascinating Facts About the Human Body Available at: <https://brightside.me/wonder-curiosities/99-quick-and-fascinating-facts-about-the-human-body-38305/>





**Top:** *Ruderal*, 2022 (installation view)  
Solo exhibition, Nir Altman, Munich, Germany

Link to extract of soundpiece: <https://tinyurl.com/a538xk8d>



**Top:** *Ruderal, 2022* (installation view)  
Solo exhibition, Nir Altman, Munich, Germany

Link to extract of soundpiece: <https://tinyurl.com/a538xk8d>





**Top:** *Ruderal*, 2022 (installation view)  
Solo exhibition, Nir Altman, Munich, Germany

Link to extract of soundpiece: <https://tinyurl.com/a538xk8d>



**Top:** *Ruderal*, 2022 (installation view)  
Solo exhibition, Nir Altman, Munich, Germany

Link to extract of soundpiece: <https://tinyurl.com/a538xk8d>





**Top:** *Not just suffering, but all forms of consciousness (Resend)*, 2022  
Wood, plaster bandage, concrete, steel  
209 cm x 78 cm x 102 cm



**Top:** *Not just suffering, but all forms of consciousness (Reposition)*, 2022  
Wood, plaster bandage, concrete, steel  
170 cm x 55 cm x 80 cm



## Injury

### Solo exhibition, Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna

Lewis' work is focused on how entropy and chaos structure the world we inhabit, how tiny, interrelated events create reoccurring patterns that are then distilled into notions of time, space or history.

*Injury*<sup>1</sup> addresses the impossibility of fellow feeling<sup>1</sup> and the works call for a different kind of inhabitation based upon the possibility that society cannot be reconciled, pain cannot be shared through empathy and that we live with and beside each other, and yet we are not as one.

Lewis's landscape is immersed in estrangement. A crackling soundscape interrupted by machinelike beeps and buzzes emanates from *Imaginary Counter Power* (2021). This architectural work with an exhaustively long sound piece creates an atmosphere which oscillates and vibrates over and through all types of bodies and things, producing a complex ecology of matter and energy, subjects and objects.

*Narrowly true but broadly misleading* (2021) pose propositions for a new set of conveying emotions, attitudes and the understanding of a body in pain or dissonance. These sign or token-like pieces can be decoded into statistics; the average surface area of human skin, how long it takes for food to be digested, the average amount of unique words spoken per day and so on. Thus, creating a strange poetic proposition for the language and understanding of dissonance.

Accumulations of layers, networks of tumorous growth, encapsulate and fossilize over soft furnishings in *Diluvium* (2021). The concrete encrusted strata of this domestic scenography are polluted with sound and the odour of cheap whiskey, each adding additional layers of sensory data, one over another, evoking the portrait of an absent body detached and extracted from the connecting temporal tissue. It is exactly this horror temporis—the ruptures, scars and proliferations of (humanly conceived) time—that James Lewis addresses in his works.

<sup>1</sup> See Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 39.

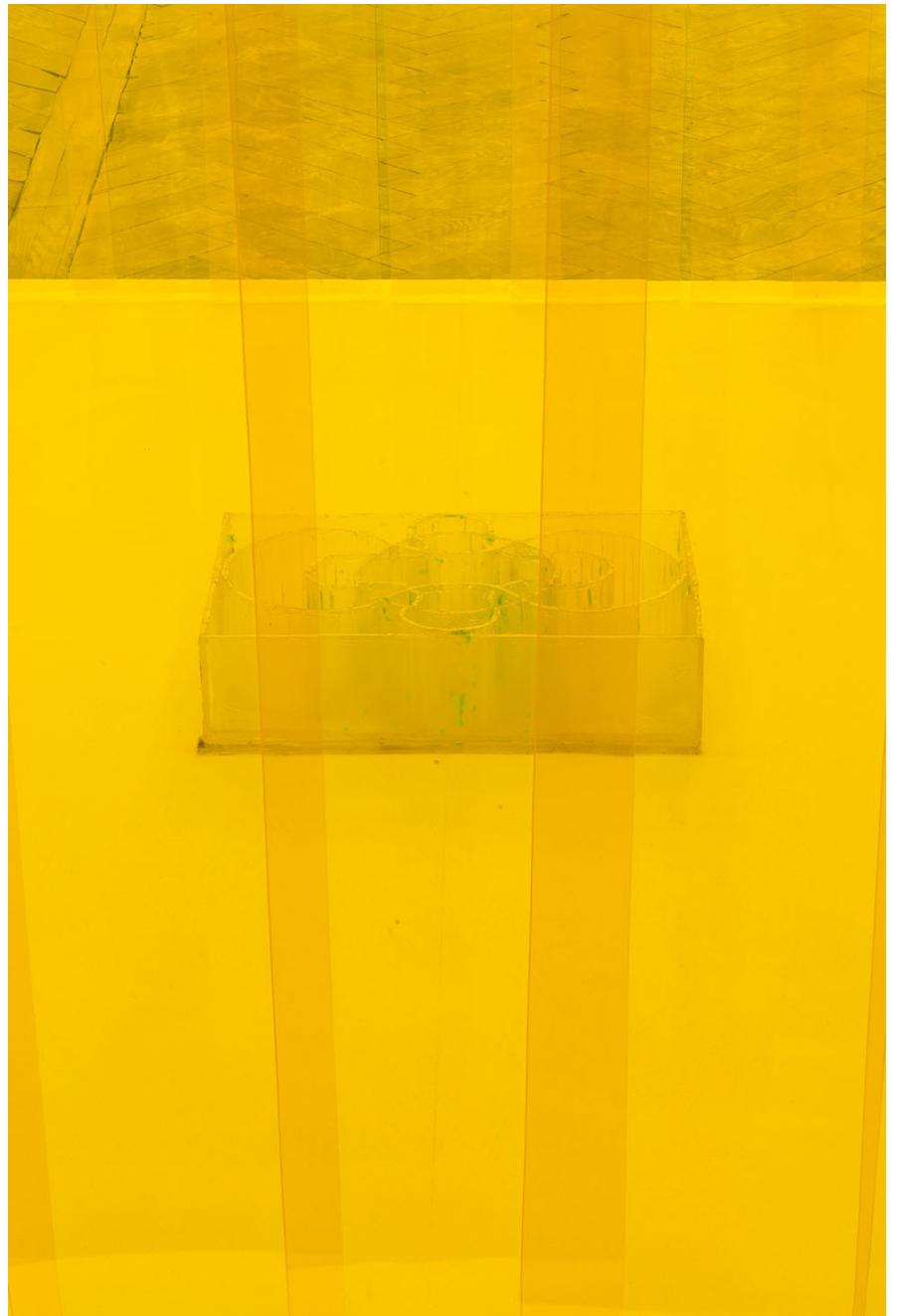


**Top left and right:** *Imaginary counter power*, 2021

Wood, polyvinyl chloride (pvc), strip light, clay, acrylic paint,  
stainless steel, epoxy resin, speakers, amplifier, electric cable  
215 cm x 205 cm x 200 cm

Link to extract of soundpiece: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8t5jxf>





**Top:** *Imaginary counter power*, 2021 (detail)

Wood, polyvinyl chloride (pvc), strip light, clay, acrylic paint,  
stainless steel, epoxy resin, speakers, amplifier, electric cable  
215 cm x 205 cm x 200 cm

Link to extract of soundpiece: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8t5jxf>



**Top:** *Injury*, 2021 (installation view)  
Solo exhibition, Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna





**Top:** *Narrowly true but broadly misleading (CONTEMPT)*, 2021  
Cast aluminium  
69 cm x 69 cm x 8 cm

**Bottom:** *Narrowly true but broadly misleading (LANGUAGE)*, 2021  
Cast aluminium  
64 cm x 64 cm x 2 cm



**Top:** *Diluvium*, 2021

Wood, foam, plaster bandage, concrete, glass, whiskey, strip light,  
clay, acrylic paint

200 cm x 200 cm x 215 cm (sofa 155 cm x 100 cm x 75 cm)





**Top:** *Country of Error (FAECES FRAUD)*, 2021  
Cast aluminium, lead  
102 cm x 60 cm x 3 cm



**Top and bottom:** *Cafe Heaven*, 2022 (installation view)  
Group exhibition, Kunstverein Salzburg, Austria





**Top left:** *The Age of Decanting (Biscuit Tower)*, 2023  
Cast aluminum  
70 cm x 70 cm x 3 cm

**Top right:** *The Age of Decanting (Curb Appeal)*, 2023  
Cast aluminum  
70 cm x 70 cm x 3 cm



**Bottom right:** *The Age of Decanting (Zombie Contingency)*, 2023  
Cast aluminum  
70 cm x 70 cm x 3 cm



**Top:** *Coming home, cleaning up, making dinner, 2023*  
Wood, plaster bandage, concrete, glass, whiskey, electric cable,  
light fitting  
85 cm x 85 cm x 55 cm





**Top left:** *Panic Landscape: Rock/Mineral, 2022*  
Wood, poly filler, plexiglass, plastic, steel  
60 cm x 42 cm x 4 cm



**Top right:** *Panic Landscape: Yellow 'blob', 2022*  
Wood, inkjet print on photographic paper, aluminum tape, poly filler,  
plexiglass, plastic, steel  
60 cm x 42 cm x 4 cm



**Bottom right:** *Panic Landscape: Wild/Poultry, 2022*  
Wood, poly filler, plexiglass, plastic, steel  
60 cm x 42 cm x 4 cm



**Top left and right:** *The Odour is Oily*, 2022  
Wood, polyvinyl chloride (pvc), strip lights, acrylic paint, stainless steel, cast aluminium, lead, speakers, amplifier, electric cable  
225 cm x 300 cm x 200 cm

Link to extract of soundpiece: <https://tinyurl.com/2zkbttst>





**Top left and right:** *The Odour is Oily*, 2022 (detail)  
Wood, polyvinyl chloride (pvc), strip lights, acrylic paint, stainless steel, cast aluminium, lead, speakers, amplifier, electric cable  
225 cm x 300 cm x 200 cm

Link to extract of soundpiece: <https://tinyurl.com/2zkbttst>



**Top:** *A History of Animals (Scattered Particles)*, 2018  
Wood, plaster, lead, concrete, agar, steel, rubber  
63 cm x 63 cm x 12 cm





**Top:** *A History of Animals (Star Winds)*, 2018  
Wood, plaster, lead, concrete, agar, steel, rubber  
83 cm x 83 cm x 12 cm

**Centre right:** *A History of Animals (They break)*, 2018  
Wood, plaster, lead, concrete, agar, steel, rubber  
36 cm x 36 cm x 10 cm

**Bottom right:** *A History of Animals (The Emergence)*, 2018  
Wood, plaster, lead, concrete, agar, steel, rubber  
62 cm x 62 cm x 13 cm







**Top:** *Le Club du Poisson-Lune/ The Moonfish Club* (installation view)  
Group exhibition, Capc Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, France



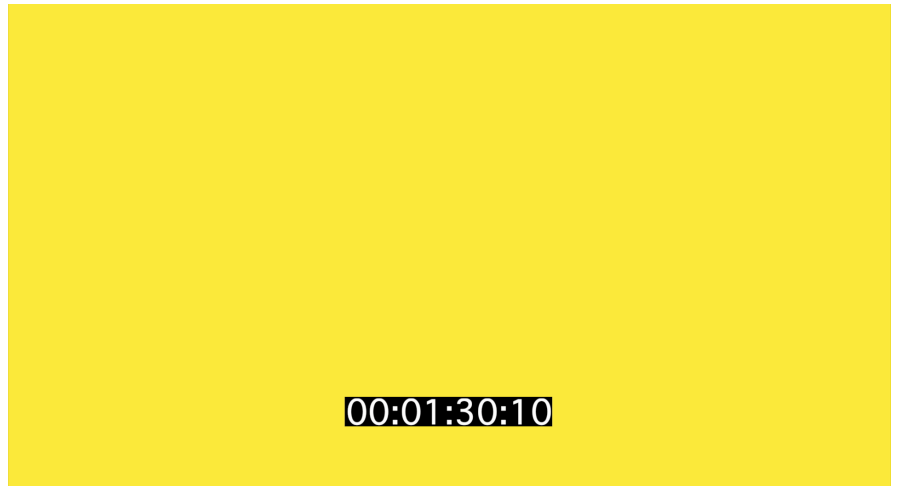


**Top left and right:** *Dusk Slug III*, 2021  
Wood, plaster bandage, concrete, glass, whiskey, strip light, clay,  
acrylic paint  
90 cm x 75 cm x 75 cm



**Top:** *Dusk Slug IV*, 2022  
Wood, plaster bandage, concrete, glass, whiskey  
90 cm x 85 cm x 85 cm

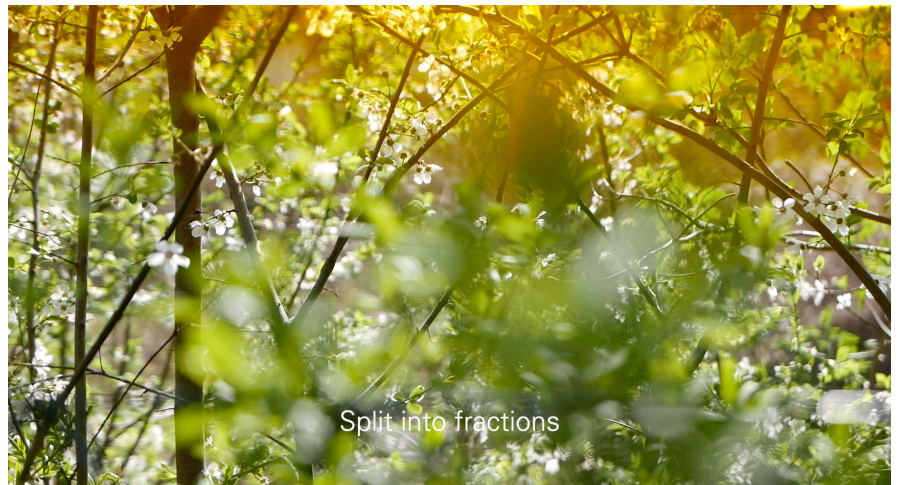




00:01:30:10



Failed constructions that were designed to keep in the heat



Split into fractions



**Top:** *Sagas*, 2019 (installation view)  
HD Video, 38'41"

Link to extract: <https://tinyurl.com/4xf5hcx6>



**James Lewis**  
**(b.1986, South London, UK)**

He has exhibited at internationally renowned institutions including; Leopold Museum, Austria (2024); Mostyn, Wales (2022); Kunstverein Salzburg, Austria (2022); Fondazione Benetton, Treviso, Italy (2022); Capc Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, France (2021)

**EDUCATION**

2010 – 2012  
MA Printmaking  
Royal College of Art, London, UK

2005 – 2008  
BA (Hons) First Class  
Kingston University, Surrey, UK

**UPCOMING PROJECTS**

*Future Fossils*, MAAM, Boston, USA (group)

**SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

2024  
*Living Stone*, Pech, Vienna

2023  
\*Focus Section, Frieze London w/ Nir Altman

2022  
*Ruderal*, Nir Altman, Munich, Germany

2021  
*Injury*, Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna, Austria

2018  
\*Vienna Contemporary, Booth F16 w/ Galerie Hubert Winter

2017  
\*Not Fair, Warsaw w/ Galerie Hubert Winter

2016  
*Before the hyle*, Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna, Austria

**GROUP EXHIBITIONS (selection)**

2024  
*Unknown Familiars: The Vienna Insurance Group Collections*, Leopold Museum, Vienna, AT  
*Transferring Domain*, Nir Altman, Munich, Germany

2023  
\*MiArt, Milan, w/ Galerie Hubert Winter

2022  
*Man's Traces in Nature*, Galeria Wschod, Warsaw, Poland  
*Staying With The Trouble* curated by Marianne Dobner, Carbon 12, Dubai  
*Temporary Atlas* curated by Alfredo Cramerotti, Fondazione Imago Mundi, Gallerie Delle Prigioni, Treviso, Italy  
*Cafe Heaven* curated by Pina Vienna, Salzburg Kunstverein, Austria

2021  
*For some bags under the eyes* curated by Romain Sarrot, sans titre (2016), Paris, France  
*Le Club du Poisson-Lune (The Moonfish Club)* curated by Cedric Fauq, Capc Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, France  
\*Art-o-rama, Marseille, w/ Galerie Hubert Winter

2019  
*flowers of sulphur*, Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna, Austria  
*Swamp Horses*, Spirit Vessel, Espinavessa, Spain  
*IDEAL TYPES (Chapter 2)* curated by Alfredo Cramerotti and Elsa Barbieri, Marignana Arte, Venice  
*non-binary*, KS Room, Feldbach, Austria

2018  
*Schmalz*, Guimarães, Vienna, Austria  
*SM*, A collaborative exhibition organised by Margaux Barthélemy and Sans titre (2016), Marseille, France  
*Carved and Shaped by Proximity*, Pina, Vienna, Austria

2017  
*Identify your limitations, acknowledge your periphery*,

Vitrine Gallery, Basel, Switzerland  
*Can't you hear my voices?* w/ Jenine Marsh, Rupert, Vilnius, Lithuania

2016  
*not really really*, Collection Frédéric de Goldschmidt, Brussels, Belgium

\*Presentations at Art Fairs

**CURATED PROJECTS**

2020  
*As time went on, a rumour started*, Gianni Manhattan, Vienna, Austria

2013  
*Everything is Material*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France

2009  
*Panda Malin Head*, Auto Italia South East Gallery, London, UK

**RESIDENCIES**

Rupert, Vilnius, Lithuania  
Futur II, Vienna, Austria  
Futur II, Sevres, France  
Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France

**RELEVANT EMPLOYMENT**

Lecturer  
Art in Context Department, AVU, Prague (September 2022 - ongoing)

Associate Member  
Conditions Artist Studios, Croydon, Surrey (January 2020 - ongoing)

Visiting Lecturer  
Plastische Konzeptionen / Keramik Kunstuniversität Linz (June 2023)

Visiting Lecturer  
Fine Art Department  
Norwich School of Art, Norwich, UK (May 2021)

Visiting Lecturer  
Ortsbezogene Kunst Department  
Universität für angewandte Kunst, Vienna, Austria (January 2018 - August 2018)

Visiting Lecturer  
Photography Department  
Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna, Austria (February 2017 - July 2017)