JOÃO VASCO PAIVA

周 奥

INTRODUCTION

João Vasco Paiva (b.1979, Portugal) is a Hong Kong-based artist who observes the complex and continuously shifting characteristics of objects and spaces. Interested in semantics – the visual language each structure, perimeter and component may possess – Paiva examines the particular lexicon of constructed, detruded or neglected units, systematically documenting, analysing and abstracting them to compose a process-driven composition that is simultaneously an artwork. At the heart of Paiva's practice is an interest in deciphering the constructed sum of human activities, and using modes of production and fabrication to peel the intricate layers that comprise the structures of contemporary life.

A graduate from the Porto Arts Institute, João Vasco Paiva moved to Hong Kong in 2006 to complete a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Media. Upon graduation with distinction in 2008, Paiva set to create works in multiple mediums, which consistently explore how urban spaces may serve as catalysts for aesthetic production. While Paiva's work is intrinsically tied to Hong Kong, his work resounds with dense urban environments around the globe: it suggests that cities, regardless of location, share certain visual and physical characteristics that, following a process of documentation and abstraction, may be reduced to readable and informative truths.

At the core of Paiva's practice is therefore an interest in deconstructing complex urban environments to create a set of identifiable codes: a universal urban alphabet, one may say. The aim of Paiva's artistic process thus extends beyond mere simplification; it is about identifying a common language that reverberates both on a local urban level as well as on an international cosmopolitan level; it is about unveiling a linguistic system, which is shared by multiple countries and is intrinsic to our current age of hyper-modernity.

Paiva's previous solo exhibition Palimpseptic (2011), for example, presented a series of works, which set to provide an understanding of everyday commuter's use of Hong Kong's rail system. At the heart of the exhibition was an installation of turnstiles, which moved to the frequency of passenger use, and oscillated in frequency depending on the time of day. This ghost-like system was supplemented by videos and paintings that reduced human crowds and their motions to blocks of colour, thereby converting the largely illegible into an algorithmic rendering, which could equally be used to understand the workings of the metro in Paris, the underground in London or the subway in New York.

João Vasco Paiva is considered one of Hong Kong's leading emerging contemporary artists and has been exhibited widely in museums as well as galleries from Hong Kong and Portugal to the UK, Australia, Hungary and New York. Recently, Paiva was selected for the Encounters section of Art Basel Hong Kong 2015 by Alexie Glass-Kantor, completed a residency at Lichtenberg Studios, Berlin and was part of a group exhibition at the Witte de With, Rotterdam as well a travelling exhibition at Artsonje, Seoul, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal, Shanghai and MAAP, Brisbane. Furthermore, Paiva held a major solo exhibition at the Orient Foundation in Macau and upcoming exhibitions include a solo show at Counter Space, Zurich. Finally, Paiva is the recipient of multiple awards, including the Hong Kong Emerging Artist Grant and the International Artist Support Grant awarded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Portugal.

Mausoleum

Art Basel Hong Kong Encounters Section
13- 17 March 2015

‘Mausoleum’ is a structural installation by the highly lauded emerging Hong Kong-based artist João Vasco Paiva (b. 1979) who observes the complex and continuously shifting characteristics of objects and spaces. Selected for the Encounters section of Art Basel Hong Kong 2015 by curator Alexie Glass-Kantor, the exhibited structure combines Paiva’s artistic concerns by presenting a visualisation of the contemporary mausoleum, which instead of historical blocks, has been created by the careful stacking of marketplace styrofoam boxes cast in stone resin. By virtue of the structure’s form, material and resonance, Paiva elevates the commonplace and extends its meaning beyond the ordinary towards the mythical. Moreover, the structure probes viewers to reflect upon the fundaments of our society, what as a civilisation we will leave behind, and what to us now is sacred.

The installation builds upon Paiva’s exploration of those elements that are part of ordinary urban cityscapes, most specifically Hong Kong, the artist’s home since 2006. The structure’s building blocks, which acutely resemble styrofoam boxes, are intrinsic to Hong Kong’s wet markets. Used to carry and store a variety of goods, from vegetables to fresh fish and meat, the purpose of these boxes is primarily to serve commercial exchanges at market stalls, while their life-span, to both the stall holders and passers-by, is not even a consideration: these objects are not worthy of contemplation- their existence is but transient. Interested in how we do not contemplate them twice, yet styrofoam ironically can take millions of years to decompose and is the cause of white pollution in China, Paiva created an impeccable cast of this object out of stone resin and recreated the tape that binds them in shades of coloured oil paint.

Stacked, one atop the other, the arrangement of boxes mimics the storing and transporting techniques used by Hong Kong vendors; towering walls of styrofoam containers or monolithic structures, treacherously tied by a fine rope and balanced atop the back of a bike. Paiva builds this installation, however, with a further source of inspiration in mind: those mausoleums of civilisations past, from Angkor Wat in Cambodia to Giza in Egypt and Chichen Itza in the Yucatan, Mexico. By arranging these boxes, which are borderline rocks because of the materials used, into an imposing cuboidal structure, Paiva channels the austerity of these sacred constructions. Furthermore, by not creating an entrance, Paiva references how these sites of historical and religious significance are closed down to the public, so that their myth is permeated by their imposing exterior form rather than revelation of their interior.

As such, Paiva’s installation presents a rich multi-layered allegory for what our current civilisation stands upon, what it will leave behind and what it considers sacred. Markets are at the base of our existence for centuries past, whether it is a stall or the greater picture of where business or commerce is held. What is often not looked at twice, indeed what is disregarded, is in fact anessential element in building the cityscapes and infrastructures that define our current society and will represent our times in the future. Whereas imposing structures used to be created for religious purposes or sacred leaders, imposing architectures are in present society constructed for places of commercial exchange or to exist as beacons of culture. Paiva thus prompts the viewer to reflect upon the bigger picture of what we as a contemporary society worship, while simultaneously urging the viewer to contemplate on a local more focused level what are the building blocks of our present.

Based in Hong Kong, João Vasco Paiva is a Portuguese artist who observes the complex and continuously shifting characteristics of objects and spaces. Interested in semantics – the visual language each structure, perimeter and component may possess – Paiva examines the particular lexicon of constructed, detruded or neglected units, systematically documenting, analysing and abstracting them to compose a process-driven composition that is simultaneously an artwork. At the heart of Paiva's practice is an interest in deciphering the constructed sum of human activities, and using modes of production and fabrication to peel the intricate layers that comprise the structures of contemporary life.

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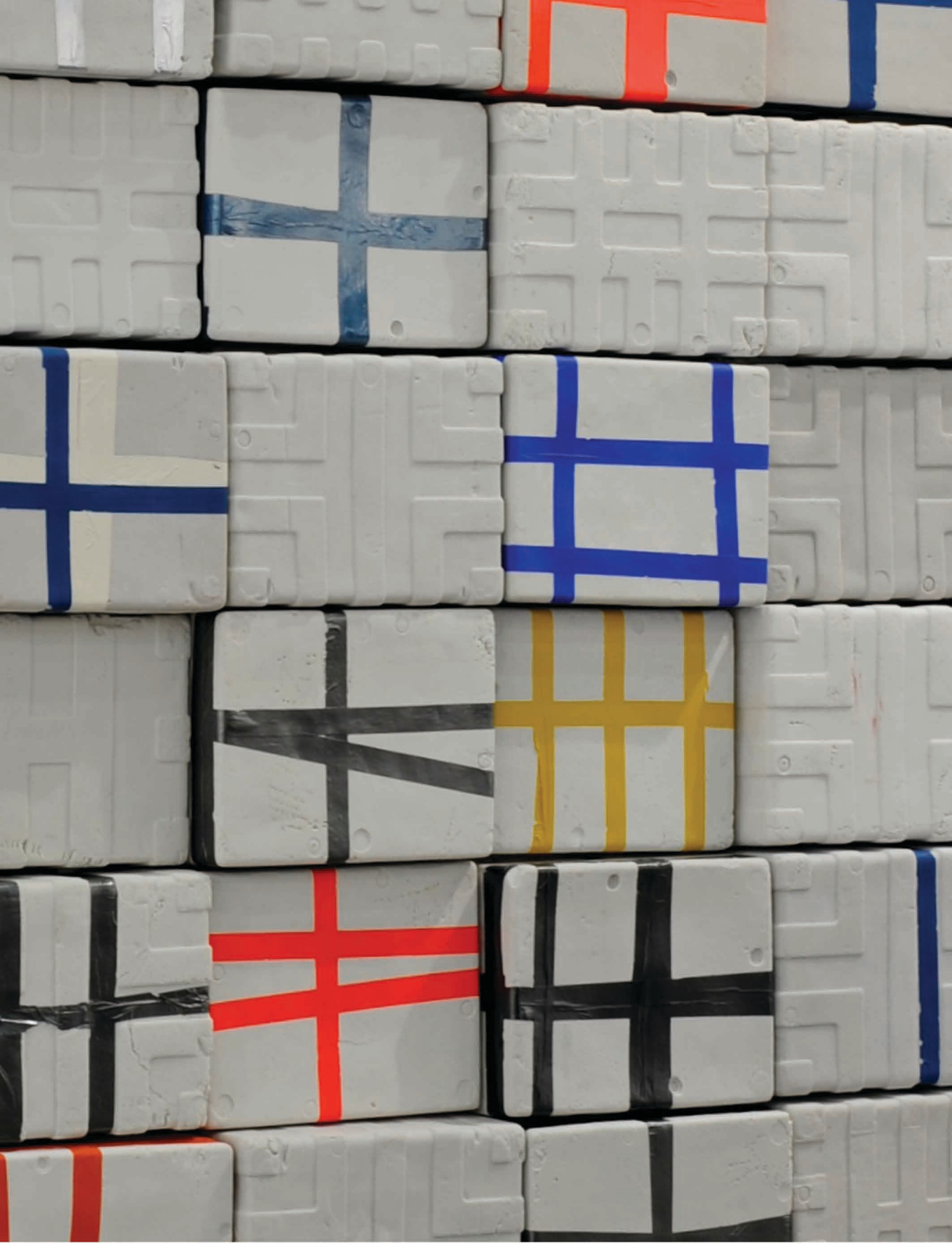
Detail shot of the installation



Mausoleum

Acrylic on stone resin modules on galvanised mild steel structure
Partial view of the installation
341 x 341 x 559cm

Cast Away

Orient Foundation, Macau
9 May – 7 June 2014

Edouard Malingue Gallery is pleased to announce that João Vasco Paiva (b.1979, Portugal) will be holding a solo exhibition *Cast Away* at the Orient Foundation in Macau. A graduate from the Porto Arts Institute, João Vasco Paiva moved to Hong Kong in 2006 and is highly lauded for his practice, which across multiple mediums, consistently explores how urban spaces may serve as catalysts for aesthetic production. Cast Away, Paiva's first solo exhibition in Macau, explores the blurred boundary between the archipelago's urbanised territory and its natural surroundings. Taking in account the history of the Orient Foundation, a XVIII century house that has historically hosted foreign visitors, as well as Macau and Hong Kong's colonial pasts, Paiva presents in Cast Away a series of works, which across different mediums, present layers and forms of inquisitive engagement with the physical, geographical and cultural margins he is himself investigating.

At the heart of the exhibition is a new film, *Unlimited* (2014), which projected on two screens, presents distant images of Google earth and travels across the sea in dialogue with two texts: "Pilgrimage", a XVIth century book that presents an account of the first impressions of Asia by a Portuguese traveller, and "China", an early XXth century book written by Jaime do Inso in the early years of Portugal's authoritarian regime. Although the two books are easily distinguishable by the fictional aspect of the former and the scientific accuracy of the latter, in "Unlimited" this difference is blurred; notions of territory, exoticism and mediated veracity are explored through a superposition of different layers of history and visual information. An acknowledgement to contemporary mapping techniques on the one-hand, the work also serves as a reflection of the areas of travel, and the fetish of the unknown; its vastness now quantifiable by a mere digital search yet previously not so simply accountable. Accompanying this work is a large-scale installation of a sailboat, which appears capsized. Made of fiberglass, the sculpture stands as both a relic of sea-bound travels as well as attests to the arrival of foreigners, both on long-term diplomatic stations as well as on short-term missions. Tilted to one side so only half of the ship is visible, the sculpture becomes a shelter, lying surrounded by a fictional sea created by the printing of Google earth mappings onto a carpeted expanse, a detail that both strikes a dialogue with his video work *Unlimited* and allows the viewer to explore the digitised material at a different level and through an alternative medium.

Accompanying these works is a series of paintings and wall sculptures that explore the fabricated spaces of travelling – arrival and departure – in which Paiva addresses the textures, signage and other elements present in both the vessels and the piers, elements that through an exposure to water reveal beneath them coats of time. Other wall sculptures incorporate textured elements from real-life boat safety jackets and seats. Amassed, stripped and repurposed, the pieces of plasticised cloth serve as indexes of the travel one makes today between the archipelago as well as to Macau. Presented as part of a two-dimensional work, the incorporated elements demand a focus on their use and purpose, while in the wider context of the exhibition, they serve as triggers for making a connection between contemporary sea travel and those modes and methods that have historically taken place. In parallel to these works will be a series, which summates the exhibition title; Paiva presents various cast objects, which he collected from the shores of his home in Hong Kong. Selected and preserved in clear scintillating resin, the final product presents a commentary on that which is shafted versus that which is collected as treasure and also builds a dialogue with the important relics held in the historical Orient Foundation where the exhibition is hosted.

Ultimately, the exhibition *Cast Away* presents a multi-faceted contemplation of not only the site's urban history but

also its wider geographical and cultural context. The exhibition prompts a reflection on contemporary versus previous travel and from that a wider consideration of previous mapping techniques versus contemporary visibility, hinting at a type of evolution without dictating the precise nature of these norms. Overall, *Cast Away* bridges a gap between Paiva's own arrival in Hong Kong, one's contemporary visitation and our engagement, through modern eyes, with a historically-charged environment.

João Vasco Paiva is considered one of Hong Kong's leading emerging contemporary artists and has been exhibited widely in museums as well as galleries from Hong Kong and Portugal to the UK, Australia, Hungary and New York. Recently, Paiva was featured in the seminal 'Hong Kong Eye' exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery in London and held a solo show at the Goethe Institute in Hong Kong. Upcoming shows include a group exhibition at the Witte de With in Rotterdam. Furthermore, Paiva is the recipient of multiple awards, including the Hong Kong Emerging Artist Grant and the International Artist Support Grant awarded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Portugal.

[Left]

Terraforma

2014
Polyurethane resin on wooden pedestal
40 x 80 x 100 cm

[Right]

Clone

2014
Dental gypsum on wooden pedestal
40 x 80 x 100 cm

[On the floor]

Blindspots

2014
Polyurethane resin
120 x 115 cm

Protection

2014
Stone resin
20 x 30 x 100 cm

Installation view

Pier I

2014
Epoxy paint and acrylic on canvas
120 x 150 cm

Pier II

2014
Acrylic on canvas
120 x 120 cm

[Left]

Portolan I

2014
Nylon on wood
120 x 150 cm

[Middle]

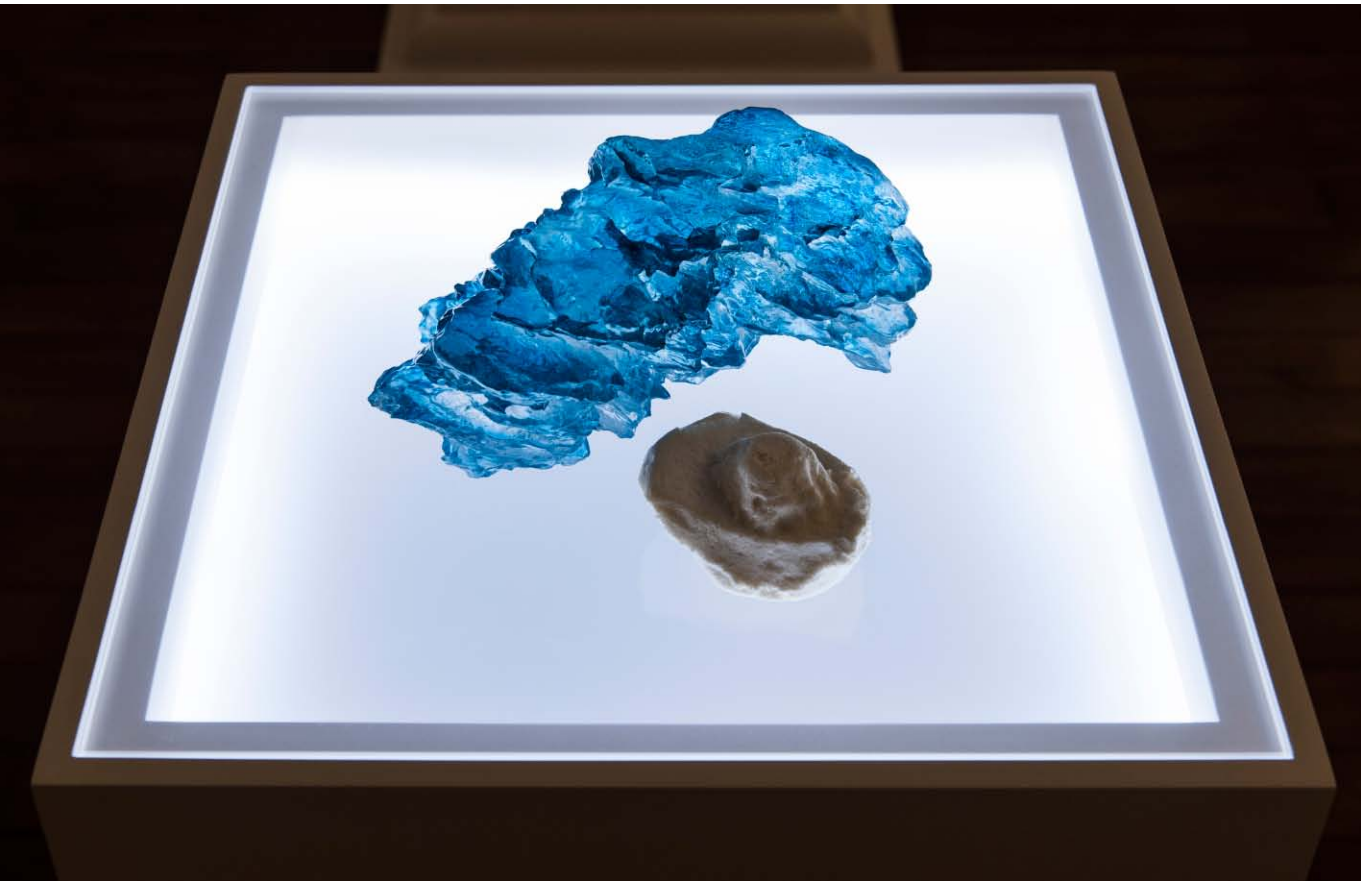
Portolan II

2014
Nylon on wood
120 x 150 cm

[Right]

Portolan III

2014
Nylon on wood
120 x 120 cm

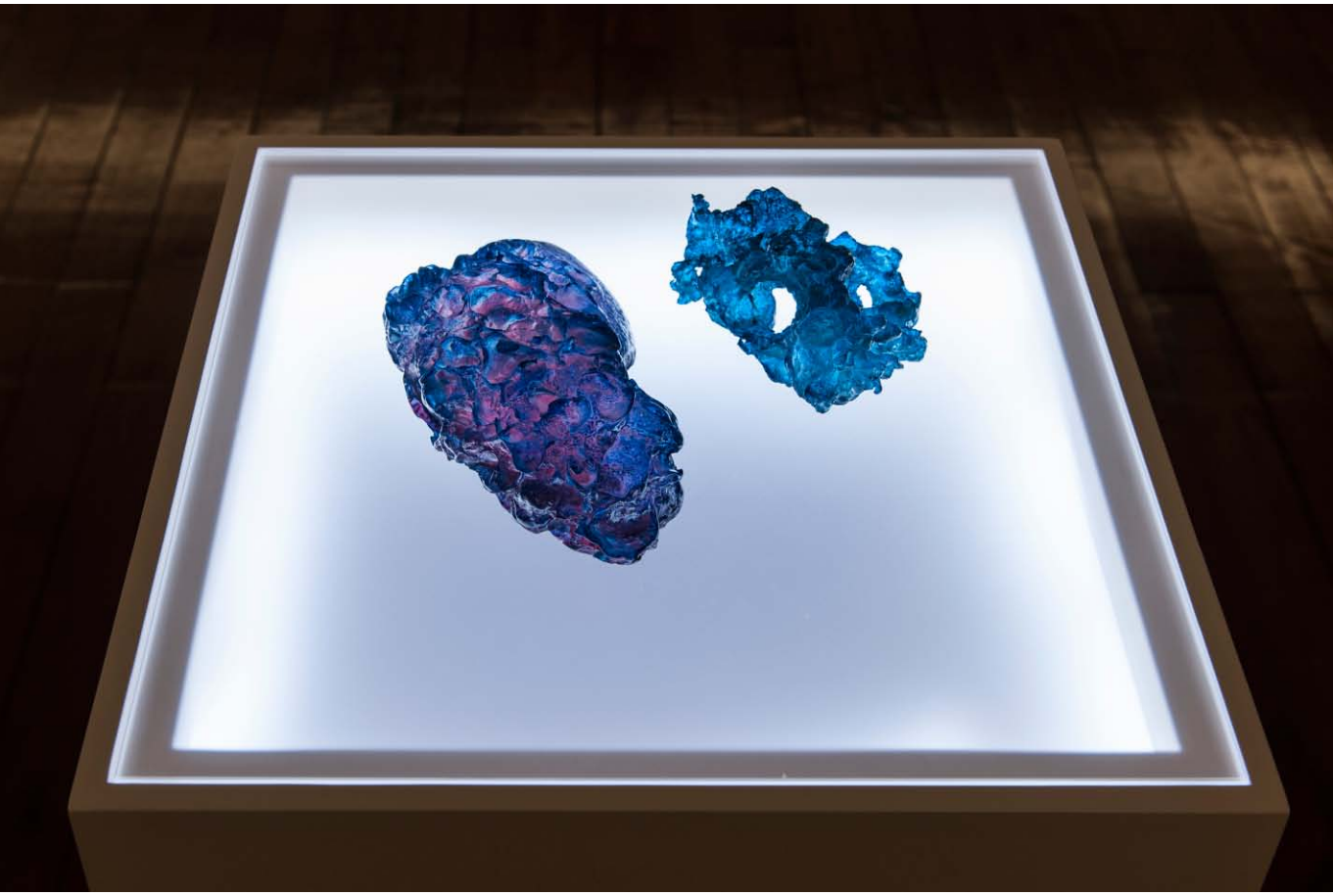


Cast Away IV

2014
Epoxy resin and polyurethane resin
Variable dimensions on wood pedestal 40 x 40 x 100 cm

Cast Away II

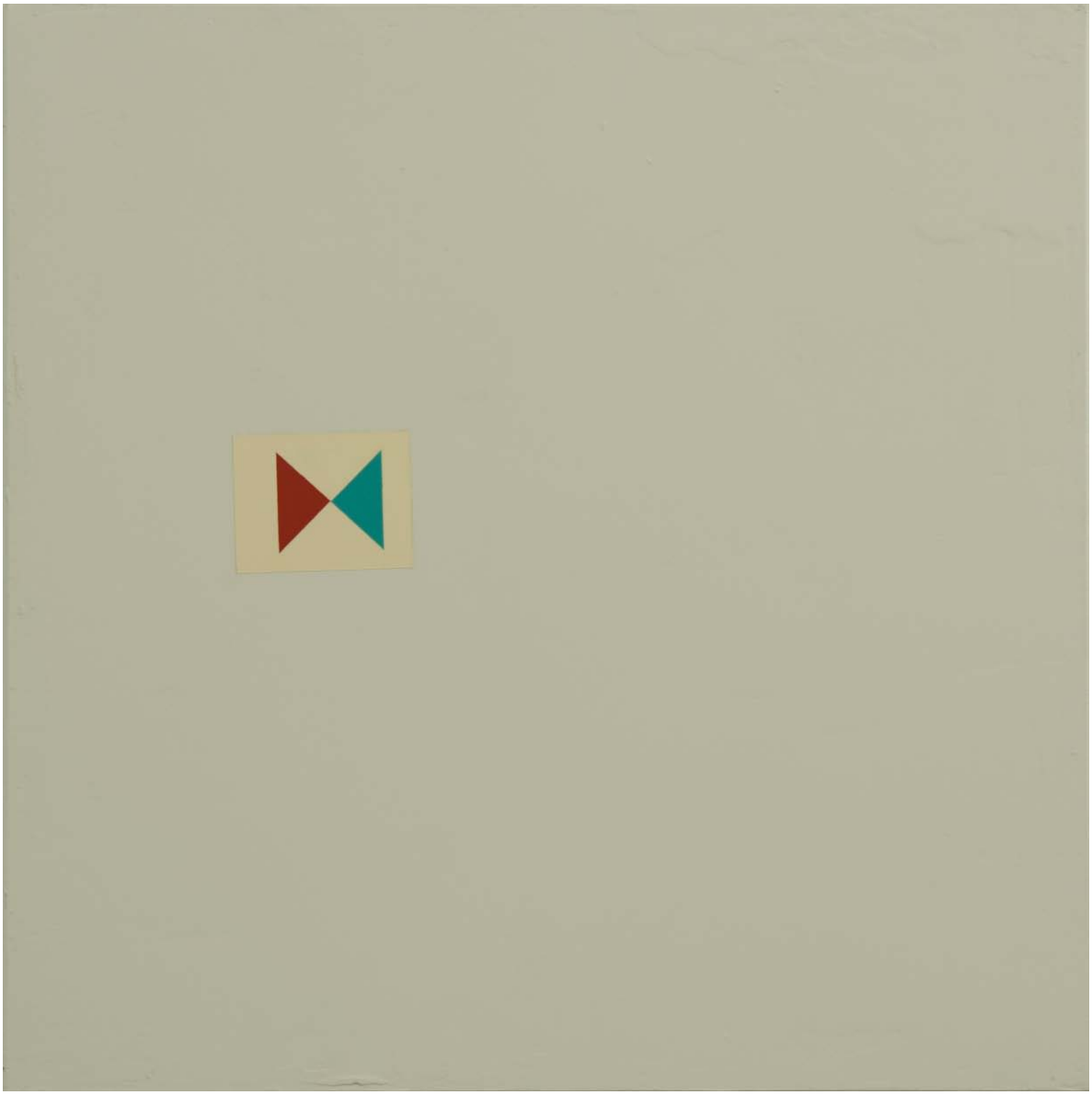
2014
Epoxy resin and polyurethane resin
Variable dimensions on wood pedestal 40 x 40 x 100 cm



Installation view

HKKF II

2014
Epoxy paint and latex on canvas
91 x 91 cm



HKKF I

2014
Epoxy paint and latex on canvas
91 x 91 cm

Safety / Confort II

2014
PVC and nylon
91 x 91 x 10 cm; 17 x 91 x 10 cm

Safety / Confort I

2014
PVC and nylon
91 x 91 x 10 cm; 17 x 91 x 10 cm

Shelter

2014
Fiberglass sculpture
Approx. 170 x 150 x 120 cm on wool carpet (700 x 400 cm)

Unlimited

2014
Two channel HD video projection
40 mins
Music by VagusNerve and João Vasco Paiva

Click to watch trailer >>
按此播放預告片 >>

Installation view

Near and Elsewhere

Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong
28 November 2013 – 18 January 2014

For his latest exhibition *Near and Elsewhere* João Vasco Paiva reconsiders, from an aesthetic perspective, the objects and entities that metropolitan citizens collectively create, form and use to subsequently neglect or discard. From the boarded-up shop fronts camouflaged by a collage of ads, to cast-off plexi-glass strips and mark-ridden fences used to prop severed wood, João Vasco Paiva has examined these detruded objects and considered their geometric qualities. By their interaction with multiple individuals, from shop-owners to real estate agents and carpenters, João Vasco Paiva remarks how each entity has unconsciously developed a visual quality that extends their value beyond their original use. As such, *Near and Elsewhere* presents a series of urban sculptures that are inspired by those shapes and objects that have unintentionally amassed an aesthetic output. These are complemented by a video, which addresses our progressive desensitising to commercial bombardment.

While created from and inspired by objects amassed in and around Hong Kong, each of the sculptures on display are crucially not to be understood as Marcel Duchamp-esque 'ready-mades'. Indeed, a rigorous process of creation has underpinned each structure so that the final result is a distant variant of the original. *Untitled (Lumberyard Array 3)* (2013), for example, is in fact a collected fence that João Vasco Paiva has repeatedly cleaned and painted, till the point where its original texture and colour is of the past and the only signs of its previous life are the thin cuts cast upon it. Similarly, the plexi-glass structures, found in the various corners of the gallery space, present the unwanted debris in a new order where their arrangement has been purposely altered to initiate a novel viewing perspective. *A Brief Moment in Time I* (2013) is a wooden board that has been painted in subtle hues of white and beige to express the geometry that is created by the piling and layering of ads on shop fronts. Furthermore, the objects that resemble the styrofoam boxes used in wet markets are resin-casts lined with paint, while his painting on pulp paper is inspired by pipes on the façades of buildings.

In addition to the reconsidered sculptures described above, João Vasco Paiva presents a couple of works that introduce further lines of tangential thought. The first are a series of floor sculptures that represent speed bumps. While they continue from the artist's interest in identifying the aesthetic qualities of the mundane - a speed bump is something you literally pass over - João Vasco Paiva presents this object in a contemplative setting, which elicits reflection on how elements that are intrinsic to a city's infrastructure and functioning are often ignored. The second work also addresses ignoral, but of a different kind: that caused by acceptance rather than lack of interest. The video *Threshold* (2013), shot in the commercial and congested areas of Sham Shui Po, Mong Kok and Causeway Bay, shows clips of eye-level landscape, blanked of all pieces of text so that all advertising is removed from vision. In juxtaposition with the other works in the gallery, the video urges a revelation: that so much of what we see is accepted within our periphery of vision, despite being visual pollution, while instead so much of what we do not look at twice, actually has aesthetic qualities and is worthy of contemplation.

Overall, *Near and Elsewhere* encourages a thoughtful reconsideration of what we choose to see and how we interact with it. Inspired by Marc Augé's discussion of 'Non-Places', João Vasco Paiva addresses, in artistic, tangible and visual form, how each person sees things differently: what is of importance to one individual is not necessarily to another. João Vasco Paiva thus presents the possibility, that if recast in an alternative form, and presented in an alternative setting, our perceptions of significance may be shifted: what was once 'near' may be cast to being 'elsewhere', and vice-versa.

A Brief Moment in Time I

2013
Oil on wooden board
178 (H) x 154.6 (W) x 3.5 (D) cm

Threshold

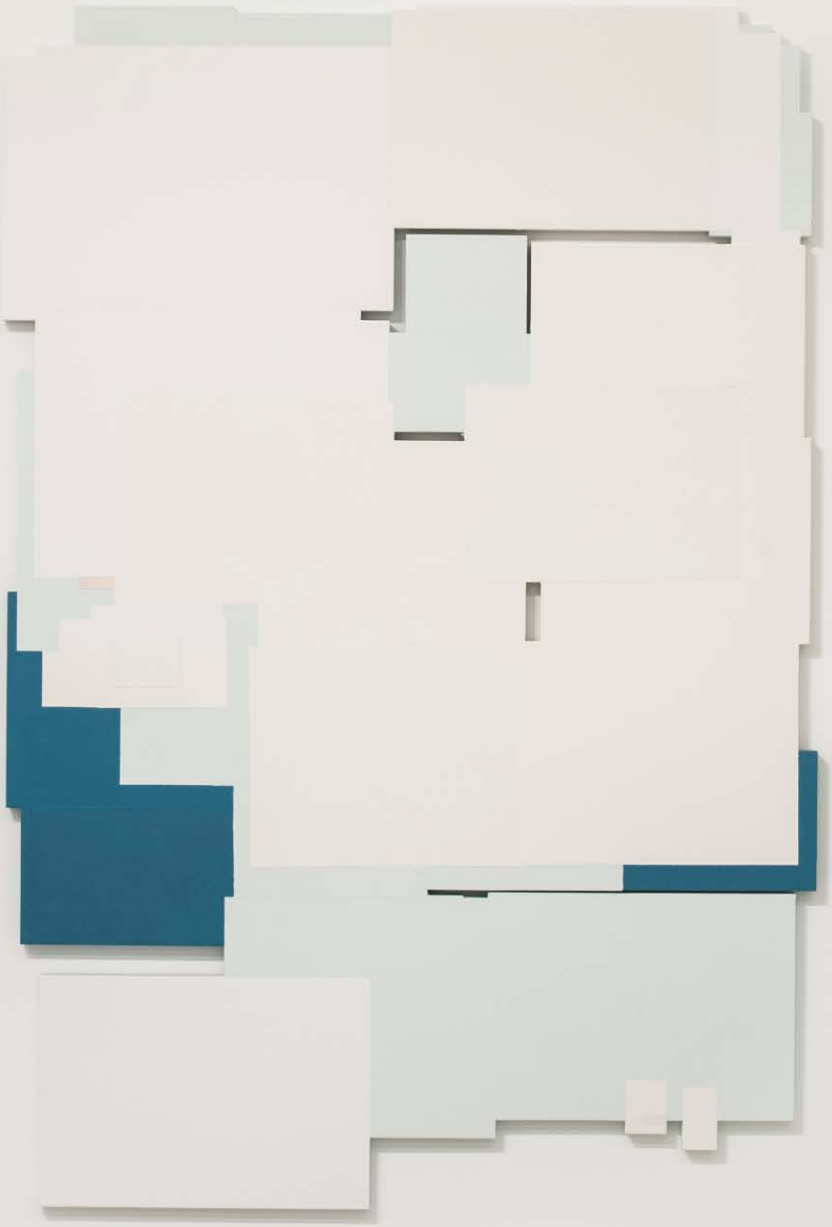
2013
Video still
3 mins 27 secs

Click to watch video
按此播放影片

Installation view

A Brief Moment in Time II

2013
Oil on wooden board
144 (H) x 95.5 (W) x 3.5 (D) cm



Untitled (Lumberyard Array 1)

2013
Latex on wood, steel base
121 (H) x 4.5 (W) x 5 (D) cm

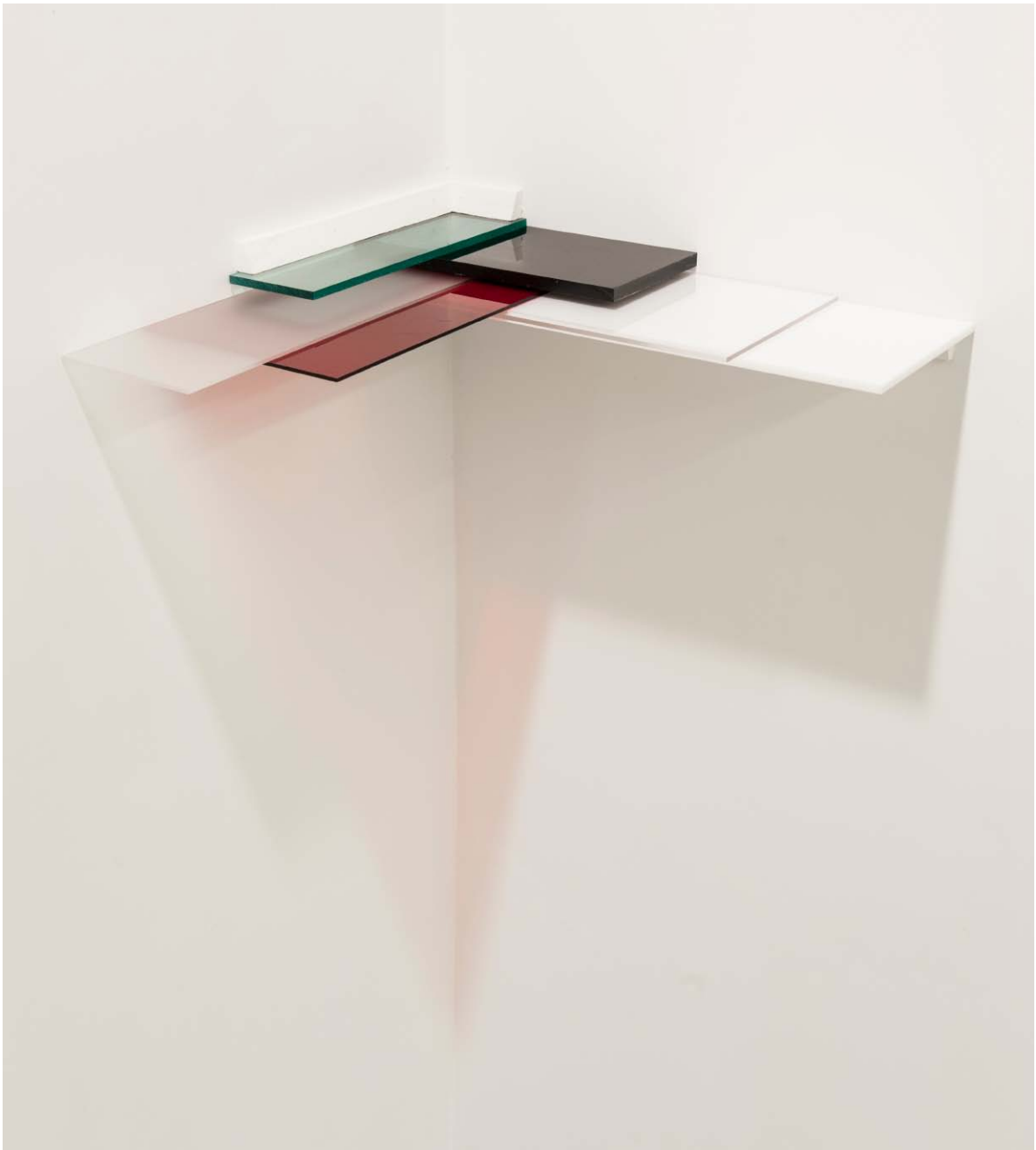
Untitled (Lumberyard Array 3)

2013
Latex on wood, steel base
119 (H) x 8.7 (W) x 5 (D) cm

Installation view

Translucent Debris

2013
Acrylic panels
15.2 x 39.5 x 60 cm

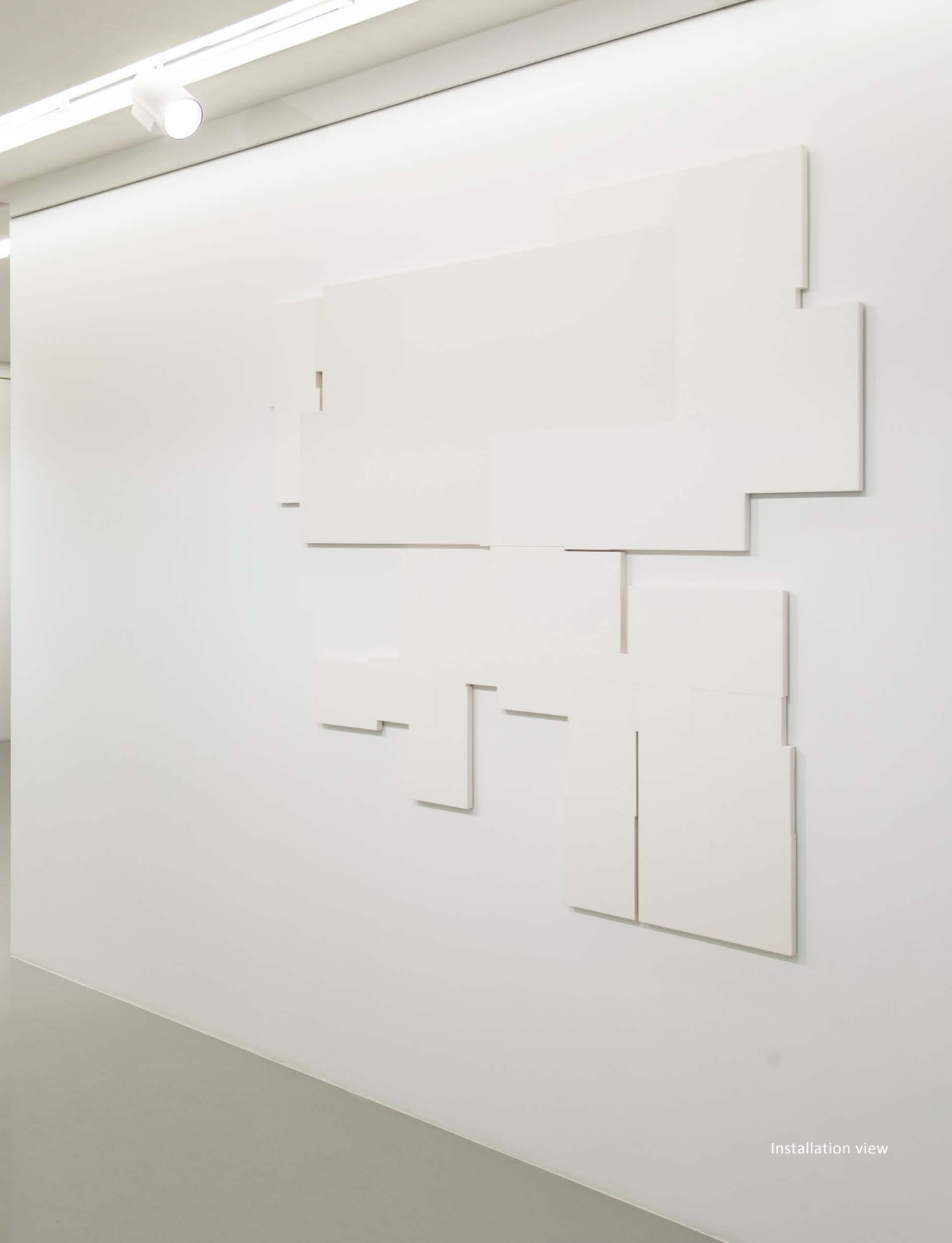


Translucent Debris

2013
Acrylic panels
18 x 22 cm

Untitled (from the Wanchai Market 2)

2013
Oil on stone resin
60 x 44 x 35 cm



Installation view

[UPPER]

Pipes for Stella 1T4

2013
Ink on pulp paper
81 x 73 cm

[LOWER]

Pipes for Stella 3T3

2013
Ink on pulp paper
81 x 73 cm

(Part 1 of 2)

Untitled (Shore)

2013
Dental stone gypsum
120 x 30 x 30 cm

A Brief Moment in Time III

2013
Oil on wooden board
184 (H) x 170 (W) x 3.8 (D) cm

Untitled (Lumberyard Array 2)

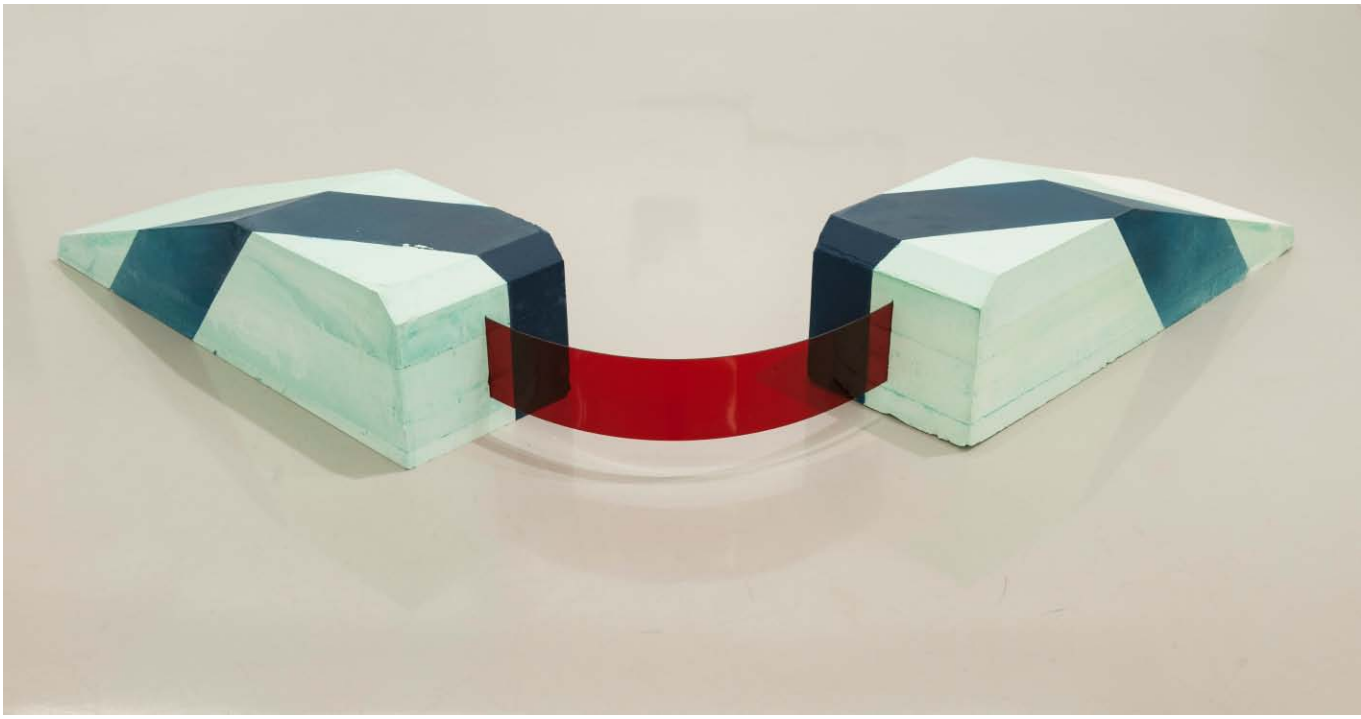
2013
Latex on wood, steel base
117.2 (H) x 23.3 (W) x 6 (D) cm

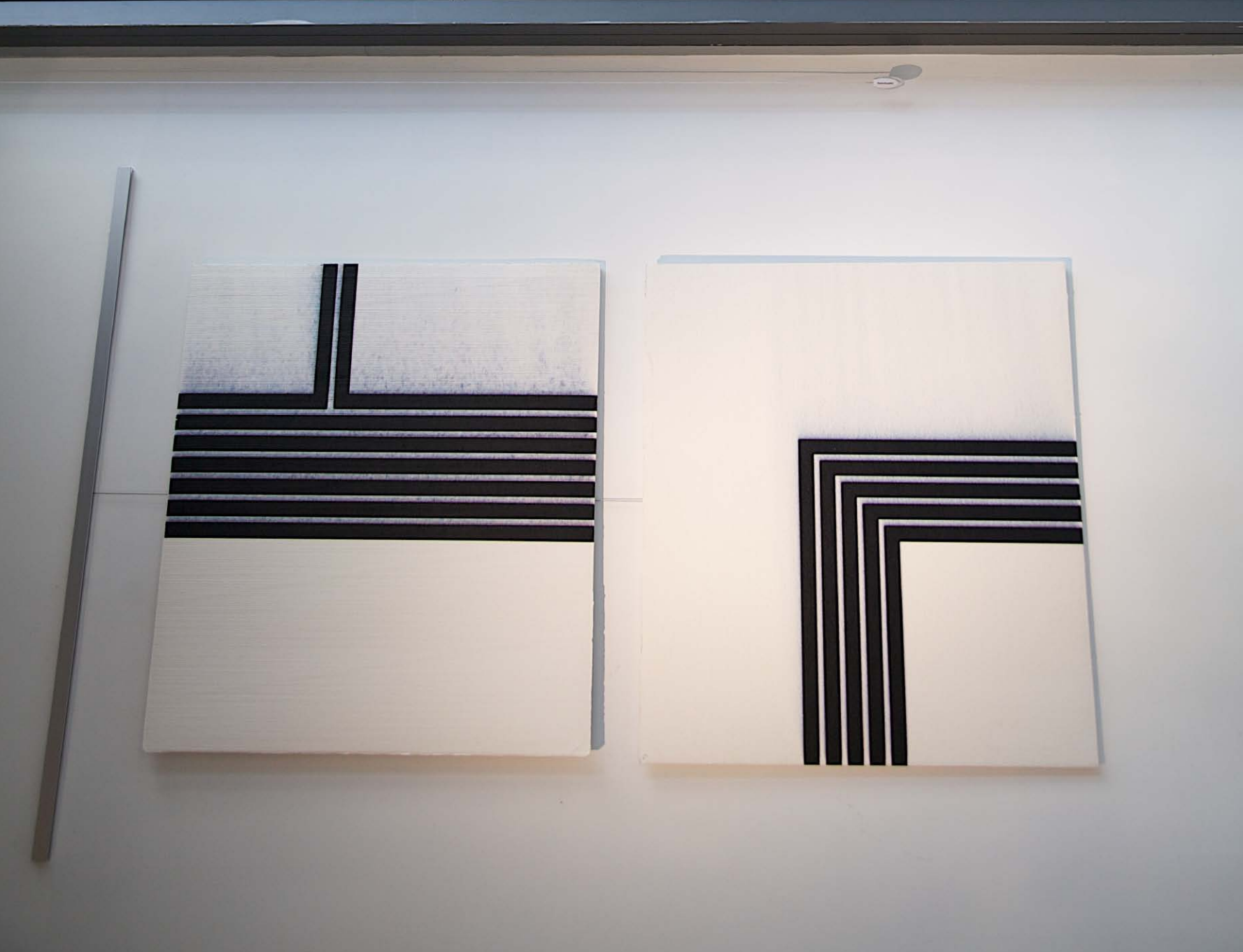
Untitled (from the Wanchai Market 1); Untitled (from the Wanchai Market 3)

2013
Oil on stone resin
60 x 44 x 35 cm each

Untitled (Corner)

2013
Dental stone gypsum
Dimensions variable





[UPPER]

Pipes for Stella 3T4

2013
Ink on pulp paper
81 x 73 cm

[LOWER]

Pipes for Stella 2T3

2013
Ink on pulp paper
81 x 73 cm

(Part 2 of 2)

[ON WALL]

Threshold

[ON GROUND]

Untitled (from the Wanchai Market 3)

Installation view

Objects Encrypted

Goethe Institut Hong Kong
20 May - 8 June 2013

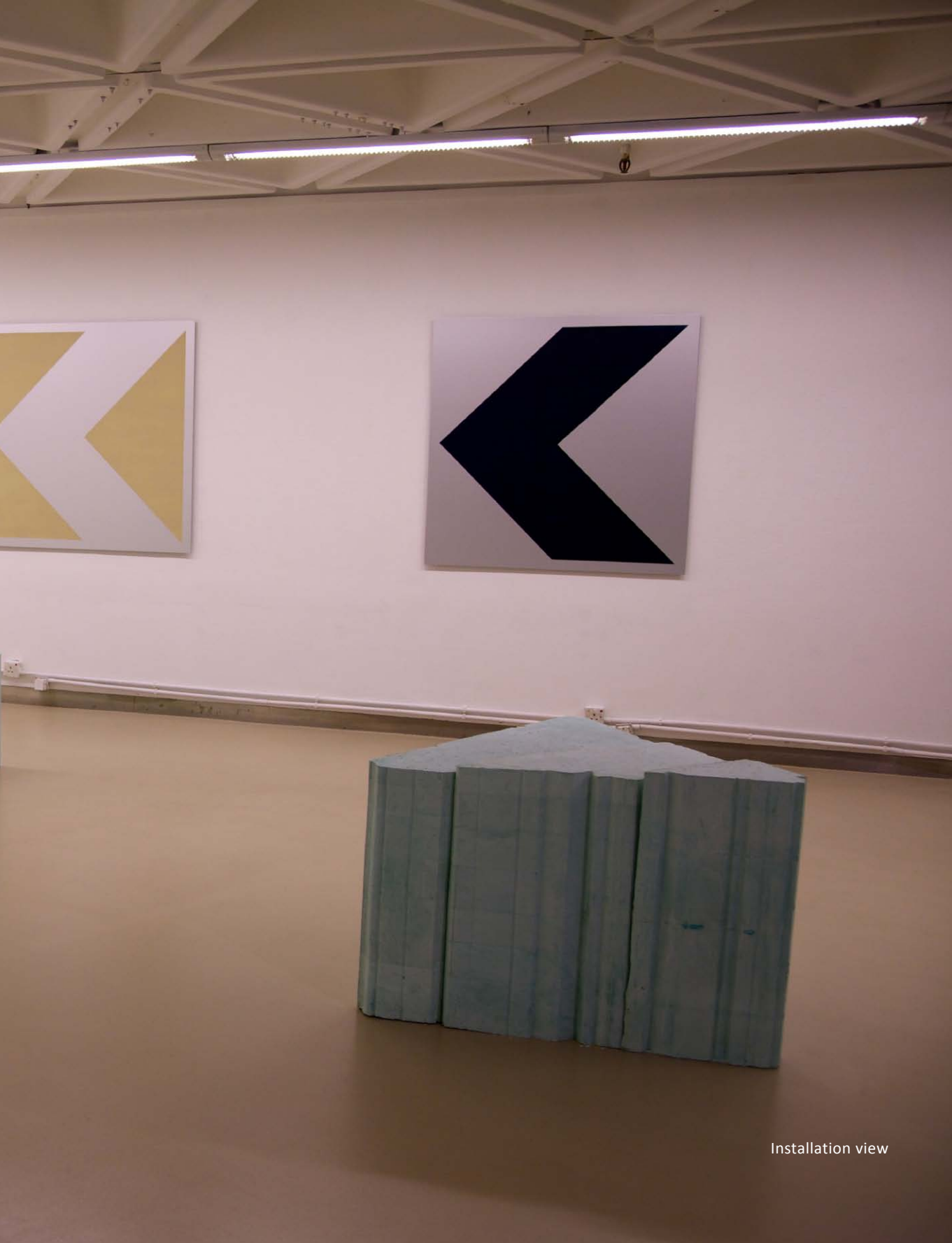
João Vasco Paiva's solo exhibition *Objects Encrypted* provides a survey of uninhabited spaces, such as back-alleys and parking lots, which are found in highly dense urban spaces, such as Hong Kong, Paiva's home since 2006. The body of work exhibited builds and develops on Paiva's core systematic process of documenting, analysing, abstracting and reducing what he sees around him to create a codified interpretation that is simultaneously an artwork.

The process behind Paiva's new body of work exhibited in *Objects Encrypted* is one of research, observation and collection: he surveys where obscure annexes are located in Hong Kong; looks closely at these spaces, observing in particular their signage, textures as well as their materials of construction; then collects these various intrinsic structural qualities. What has been produced is a series of works that transplants the mundane and fuses the aesthetics of the street - not the bustling spaces one usually associates Hong Kong with - but rather those more secretive and annexed parts. Indeed, Paiva presents the key visual characteristics of areas that we might otherwise have never looked at and quite possibly forgotten: empty space in Hong Kong is never long-lasting, rentability being prioritised over abandon.

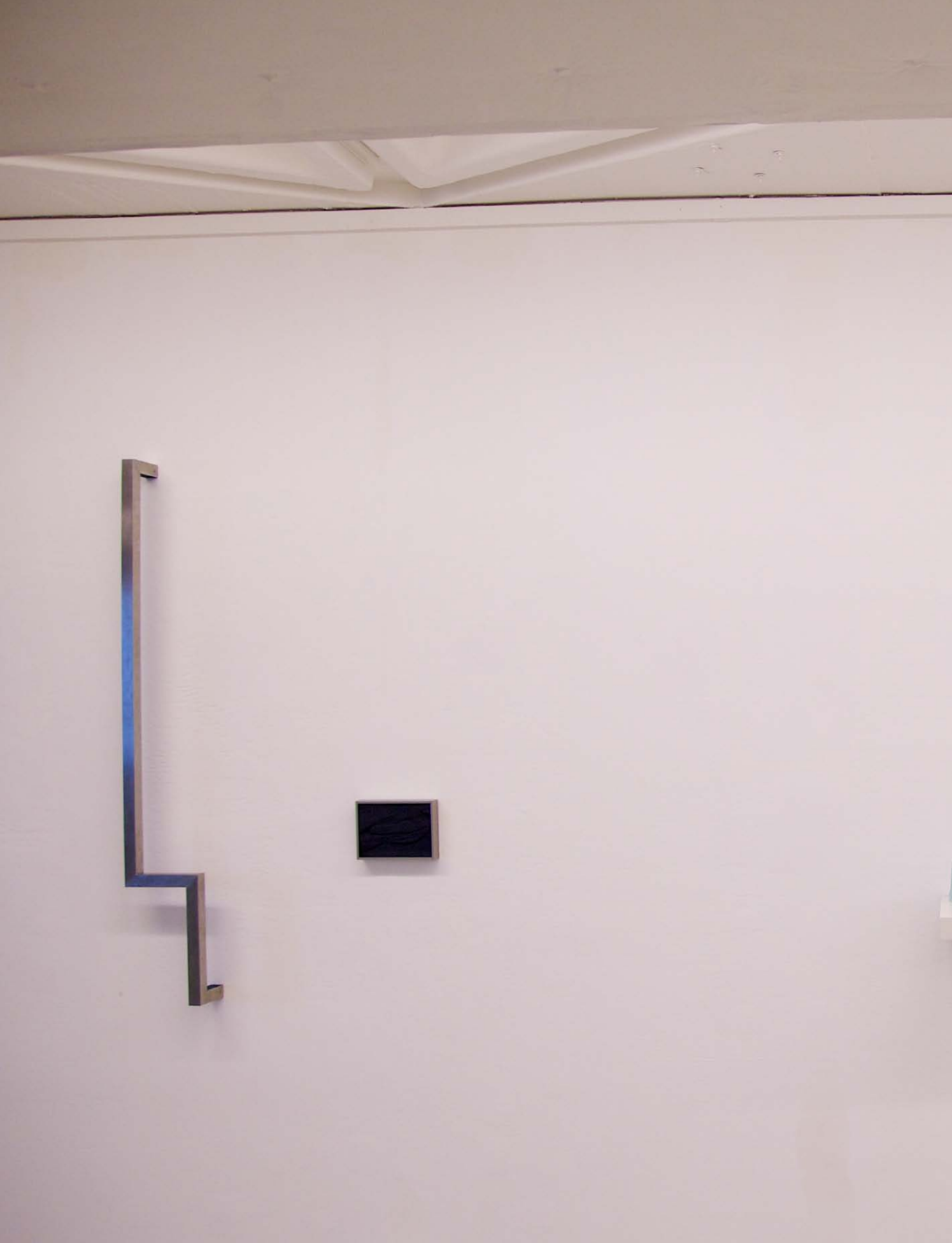
Paiva's interest in the architecturally ordinary is not a superficial survey though; rather, it is a very focused investigation into the core constituents that make up this dense metropolis' alter-areas. Indeed, Paiva takes a nearly geological interest in the range of aleatory construction alloys used, finely dissecting their intricate designs and inherent decay. The result is a well-informed and detailed extrapolation rather than a mere general impression of these sites. For example, in the series *Archetypes for Tar and Concrete*, Paiva wandered through back-alleys and parking lots looking for interesting textures to cast. The product is a series of wall pieces, made of encrypted silicone, placed alongside aluminum structures that are arranged according to the semi-random arrangement of posters, signage, pipes and metal structures found in these under-looked places of the city.

There is, however, a further angle to Paiva's work; by bringing these artworks into the Goethe Institut Hong Kong he investigates what happens when you transplant the ruffian into a clean, bright and hermetic space: a place that is not uninhabited, out of people's tracks, but rather a purposeful destination for observation. The transplant and its consequences cannot be ignored: the objects seem out of place, there is a breakdown of barriers between the outside and the in and there is a mounting tension between the solely functional components and the crafted interior design. This body of work therefore goes beyond the process of collecting and creating, and addresses the antagonism of locations.

Installation view



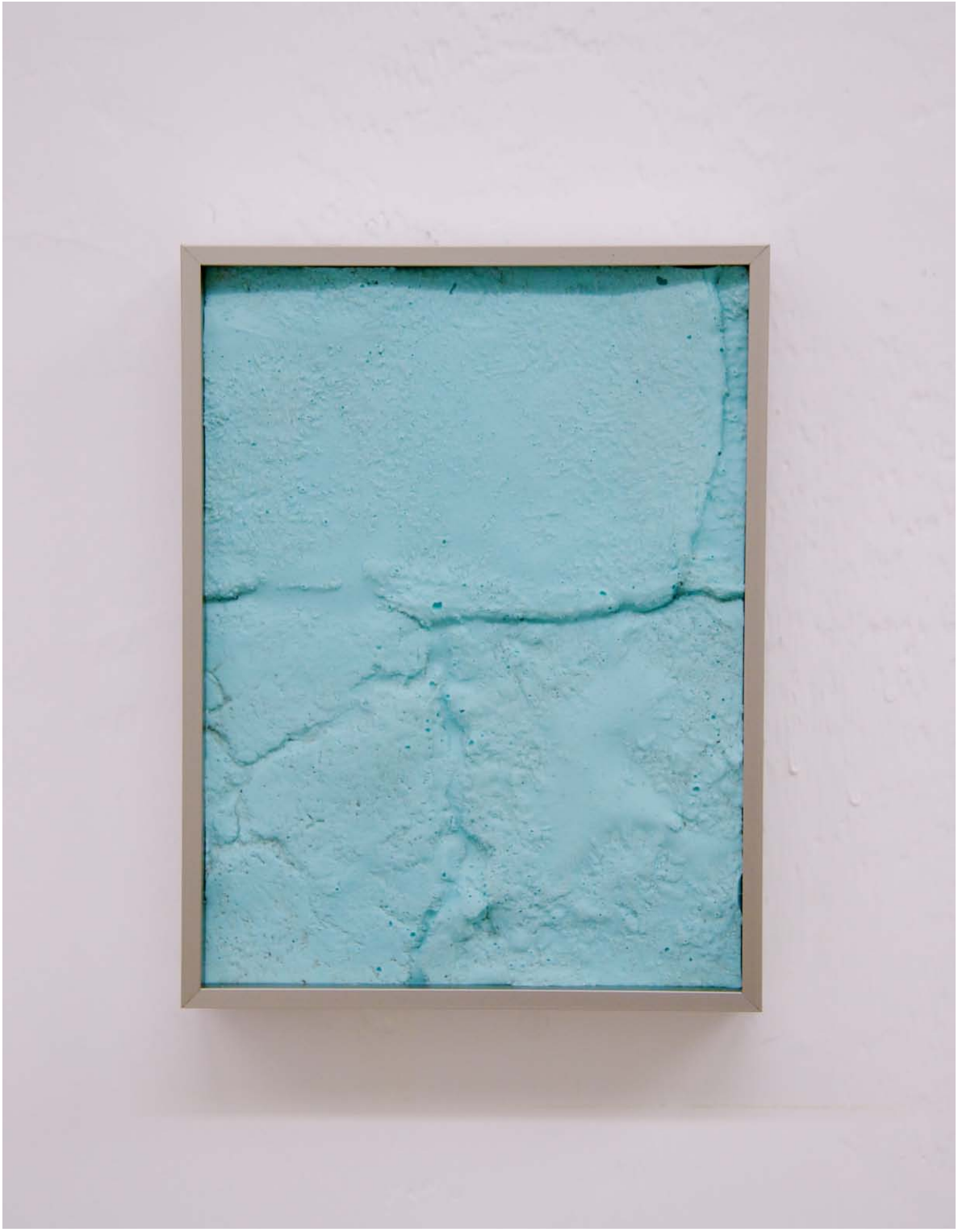
Installation view



Installation view

Archetypes for Tar and Concrete March Road II

2013
Oil paint on silicone on aluminum frame
18 x 15 cm



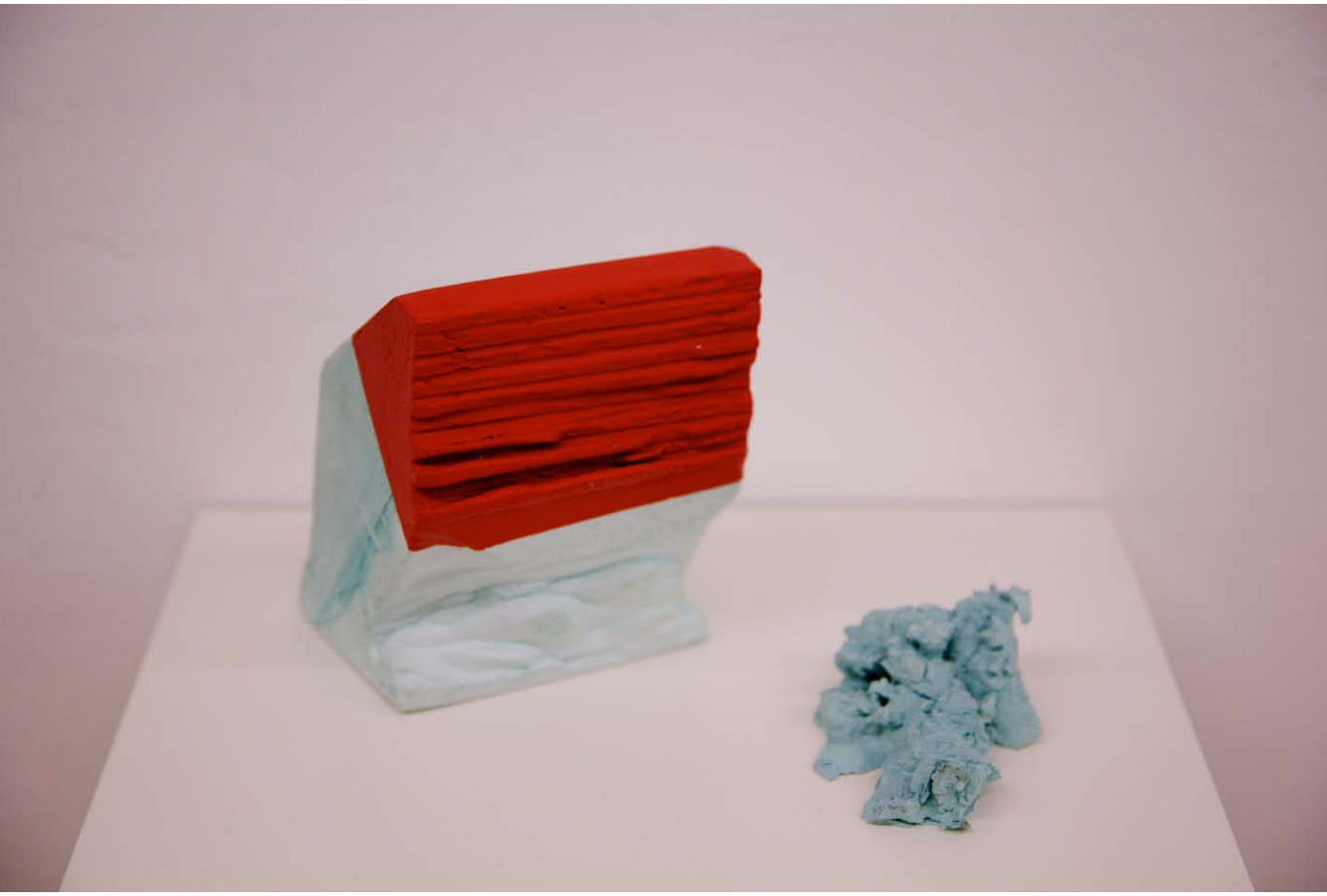
Installation view

Annex 1

2013
Acrylic on dental stone gypsum
Variable dimensions

Annex 2

2013
Acrylic on dental stone gypsum
Variable dimensions



Archetypes for Tar and Concrete Back Alley Excess

2013
Oil paint on silicone on aluminum frame
13 x 13 cm

Collection of ‘Objects Encrypted’ pieces exhibited at Carriageworks, Sydney, September 2013

INTERVIEW

***Artinfo*, 21 May 2013**

*Hong Kong-based Portuguese artist **João Vasco Paiva** addresses the "non-places" of the city as proposed by anthropologist **Marc Augé**. These locations often of a purely functional purpose, such as Hong Kong's MTR stations, parking lots, and the backs of high-rise buildings, are taken for granted by local residents, but have captured the attention of the artist.*

*"I wonder how these places can become landmarks," says Paiva whose current exhibition "Objects Encrypted" is presented by **Edouard Malingue Gallery** at the **Goethe Institut Hong Kong** until June 8. "The keyword to everything I'm doing is framing. It's calling people's attention to it."*

The exhibition contrasts the institutional space against the neglected urban space. A series of small-scale works feature plaster casts of the texture of concrete pavements and tar-covered roads found in back alleys near his studio in Wanchai. These textures are further explored in monochrome sculptures that juxtapose the castings with sharp edges that are machine-cut by software that Paiva designed to mimic natural erosion. Site-specific work has also been created, taking inspiration from the ceiling structure of the Hong Kong Arts Centre building that houses the Goethe Institut Hong Kong.

We chat with Paiva at his studio about the aesthetics of decay, framing the mundane, and private versus public space in Hong Kong.

AI: Artinfo
JVP: João Vasco Paiva

AI: What places in Hong Kong did you explore for this new series of works?

JVP: I'm basically confronting two different places, the institutional place where the show is going to be, and at other

spaces actually in the streets behind here in Wanchai in the alleys, they are like a backstage, not designed for people to go into. Mostly they are not planned which means what happens in those places in visual terms is pretty random. It's a global act of many individuals doing things to these places.

For example there's a couple of underground parking lots here on Lockhart Road. Many people don't drive and choose to see these places only from the outside and we assume that we know what is inside. I think these places have aesthetic value and I wonder how can they actually become a landmark, because they do say a lot about this decade, but they are often ignored because they are merely functional.

For this show, the organisation of the exhibit is mimicking or mocking the organisation of the pipes in the alleys. There are some small pieces that are displayed on the walls of the gallery according to the order and structure of how they are seen on the street, which is pretty random. For example when you see those forbidden signs near an escalator you see a sign telling you to hold onto the handrail then a no smoking sign then a no eating sign. They have a certain arrangement that may not have any aesthetic purpose but in the end there is composition structure that can be explored.

I'm transplanting all these things into the gallery space but this transplanting has implications. I'm not doing an exhibition of found objects, there is a process and this transplant cannot be something accidental.

AI: Can you tell us about the site-specific sculptures?

JVP: There are a number of sculptures based on the ceiling of the Hong Kong Arts Centre, which look like an isometric grid, with all these triangles. I'm casting these triangular shapes and transforming them into sculptures that also take properties from concrete blocks that you see on the street.

AI: How does the software that makes random cuts mimicking natural erosion continue your examination of neglected spaces?

JVP: There is a very interesting thing about ruins. We like ruins because it shows us there was this civilisation, we like it even more because there is time that goes through things, and that gives us a sense of something that is bigger than us, that was here longer than us. Here in Hong Kong you see a lot of places that already have all these elements of decay that were created by time.

Go to Hollywood Road and see these wall trees jumping out of the concrete, or on Lamma Island where I live there are cement paths throughout the island but nature is always coming in, making breaks in the cement, breaking it up with all these cracks. This is the kind of aesthetic I'm interested in.

My way to perceive this besides the castings is through software that cuts sharp geometric lines. So there is a very big contrast between the shapes the plaster casts create and the cuts made by the software. I think this is the contrast you see in a broken temple in Greece.

It's this sense of when it comes to creating objects, creating art, how can we let this get out of our control, how can this be made by a series of elements, such as time and weather and a group of people who collectively add to it.

AI: It seems to be quite a dispassionate examination of the human experience in the urban world. Are you directly interested in people?

JVP: My interest in people comes from this interest of what people create and the place that people inhabit, rather than talking about people's experience, which could be pretentious, because who am I to talk about other people?

There are people here that I see everyday and I know exactly what they do. I'm interested in the space that designs their lives. There is a lack of private space in Hong Kong and people's lives are mostly on the streets. People very easily change the streets, they do things to the streets. It reclaims the street and the public space as their own, it's a very strong intervention.

Palimpseptic

Saamlung Gallery (Hong Kong), 2011;
Saatchi Gallery (London), 2012;
ArtisTree (Hong Kong), 2013

“This presentation introduces a body of work developed in order to confront both the architecture of the space and its environment in the disconcertingly banal office buildings of downtown Central. Beginning from the perspective of the non-spaces manifested in such areas and particularly in public infrastructure like that of mass transit, the artist empties his world of information and specificity, abstracting visual material into little more than shape, color, and tactile experience.

The exhibition centers on a set of turnstiles — nearly identical to those found at the entrances and exits to every subway or other mass transit station — modulated to resemble a minimalist sculpture. Here, the arms of the wheel spin away to a loud and constant clicking, seemingly propelled by the phantoms of the anonymous users who pass through such sterile spaces on a daily basis.

These objects do indeed move in time to the flow of passengers during rush hour, but it is perhaps the sense of naked violence that accompanies their sheer emptiness that most excites. Paiva collapses information onto its original physical carrier, implying through its autonomous motion that the thing itself knows something more than it should.

Accompanying this major installation is a suite of process-based abstract two - dimensional objects also associated with Paiva’s linguistic experiments in the mass transit system. In this case, he has collected as source material the maps, diagrams, signs, and wayfinding aids that codify the flow of bodies through the rail system in Hong Kong, known as the MTR, and emptied them of any representational or symbolic information. Letters, numbers, and other recognizable signifiers all disappear, leaving behind simple color fields that forefront a rather different set of information, doing so primarily through formal and aesthetic concerns.

A set of videos, such as *Convergence*, also included in the exhibition similarly allows the absent human to appear only in the form of a negative trace: organic forms in block colors move across the screen, generally from bottom to top across an empty field. Although the content is largely illegible, these shapes — appearing at times singly but typically in large agglomerations of flailing lines and moving corners — are actually based on digital models created by observing crowds emerging from and entering the exits of mass transit stations. For Paiva the human is a less provocative category than the tools and codes that define it; as such, here it is the parallel between architecture and algorithm that results in an intense and fascinating visual experience.”

– Robin Peckham, curator

‘Palimseptic’, installation view, Saamlung Gallery, Hong Kong, 2011

‘Palimseptic’, installation view, Saamlung Gallery, Hong Kong, 2011

Convergence

2011
Animation, monitor on stainless steel stand
5 mins

Click to watch video >>
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‘Palimpseptic’ at travelling ‘Hong Kong Eye’ exhibition,
Saatchi Gallery, 2012; ArtisTree, 2013

Forced Empathy

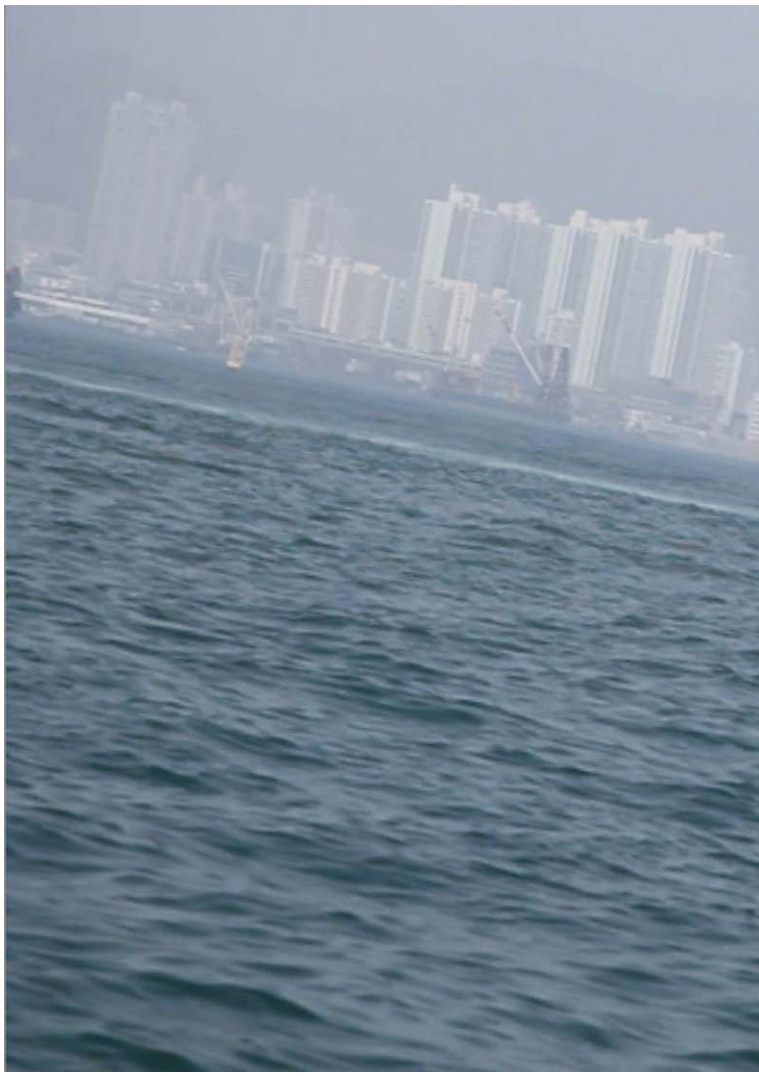
Experimenta 2011;
Sharjah Foundation 2012;
Hong Kong Eye (Artistree) 2013

Forced Empathy: Anchored Monument 1 (2011) is a project that demonstrates João Vasco Paiva's rigorous process of isolating and deconstructing the elements that make-up a particular scene and how he subsequently reconsiders them in order to construct a new set of artistic entities. Forced Empathy in particular consists of a single-channel video, a kinetic sculpture and a series of prints. The linchpin of the entire project is the film, which captures an isolated single view of Hong Kong harbour framed by water and indistinct high-rise buildings with a yellow buoy as the clip's central stationary protagonist. Indeed, as the tide passes and the harbour-scape sways to the motions of transient traffic, the buoy - or 'monument' as the title would suggest - remains transfixed, unsympathetic to the changes around it. From here, Paiva analysed the frequency of tidal change, the restrained movement of the buoy and the ratio of water to sky and land, to assemble, across several mediums, artworks that express and exemplify his sensory deconstructions.

Forced Empathy combines Paiva's skills across various mediums. The film, created using a stationary camera, was specifically computerised to generate the primary filmic object: the stationary buoy. Indeed, the central object was "forced" to remain stable and equidistant from all edges of the frame, such that the background environment inversely adopts the motion of the floating platform and takes on the role of visual noise"[1] . The result is a combination of mesmerisation and confusion as the viewer finds himself transplanted into the position of the buoy, yet with the perspective and logical understanding that the surroundings should be static rather than oscillatory. The movement, or what were the motions of the buoy, however, are not lost. Rather, Paiva has translated them to animate another object, the wooden kinetic sculpture, which emulates in form the harbour buoy. Positioned alongside and in juxtaposition to the film, Paiva constructs a sort of inverse parallelism between the moving image and the viewer's surrounding space.

Adjacent to this apposition are a set of prints. One is an encryption of the movements of the kinetic buoy and thereby the tangential sequences of the sea in Paiva's film. The second is a reductionist image, an abstraction of the harbour background that breaks down the colour palette of the film's main frames to two shades of teal-blue and grey that represent the sea and the sky, respectively. Through these prints Paiva visualises what we have experienced, and expresses in codified form, without the need for sound or text, the observations he has made from analysing the scene surrounding an element that is often passed by and jostled rather than isolated for study.

[1] Robin Peckham, *A New Documentation*, Digicult, December 2011
(http://www.digicult.it/digimag/issue-069/a-new-documentation-an-interview-to-joao-vasco-paiva/)



Forced Empathy

2011
Video still
7 mins 29 secs

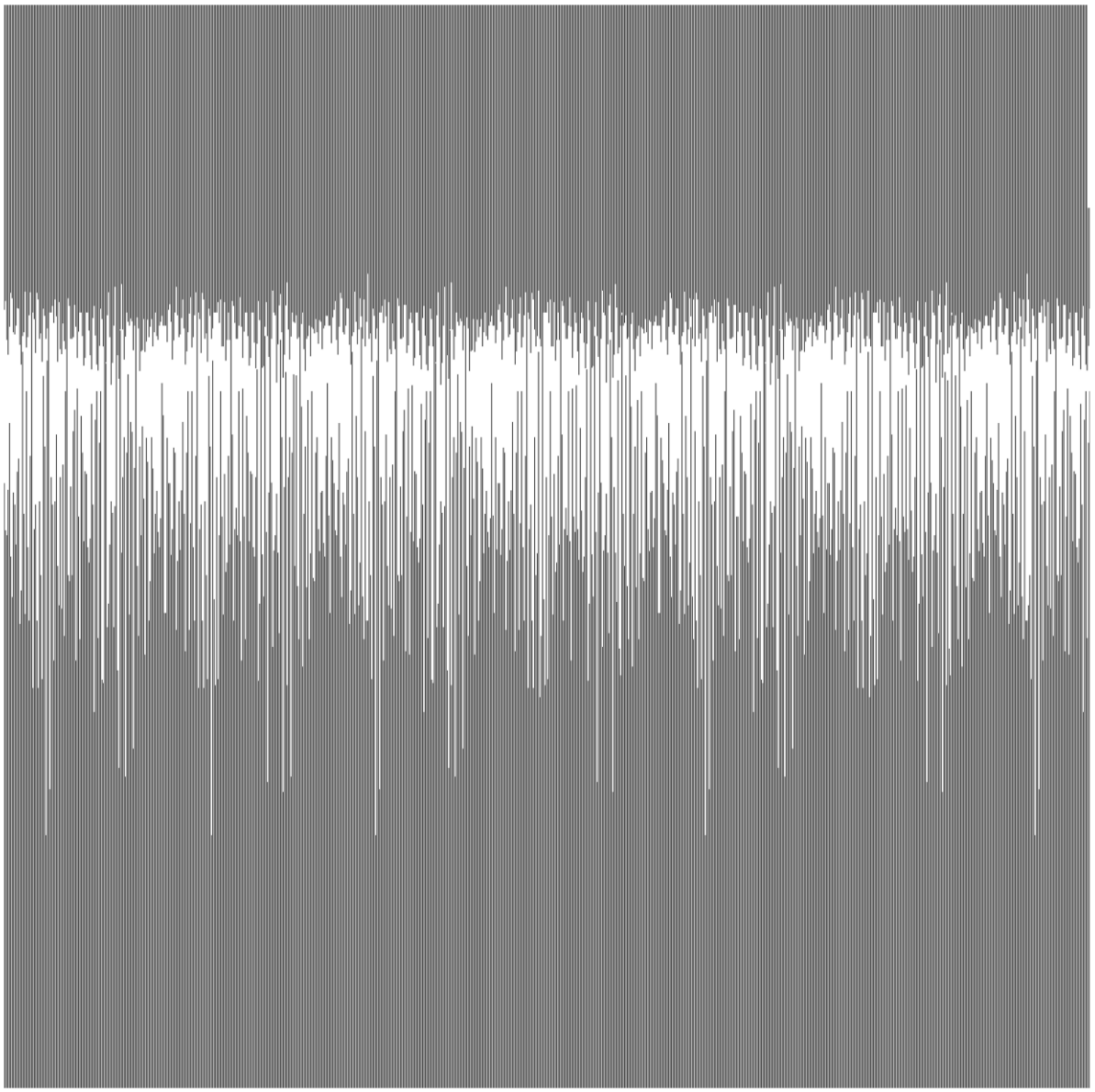
Click to watch video
按此播放影片

Anchored Monument I

2011
Balsa wood kinetic sculpture
Variable dimensions

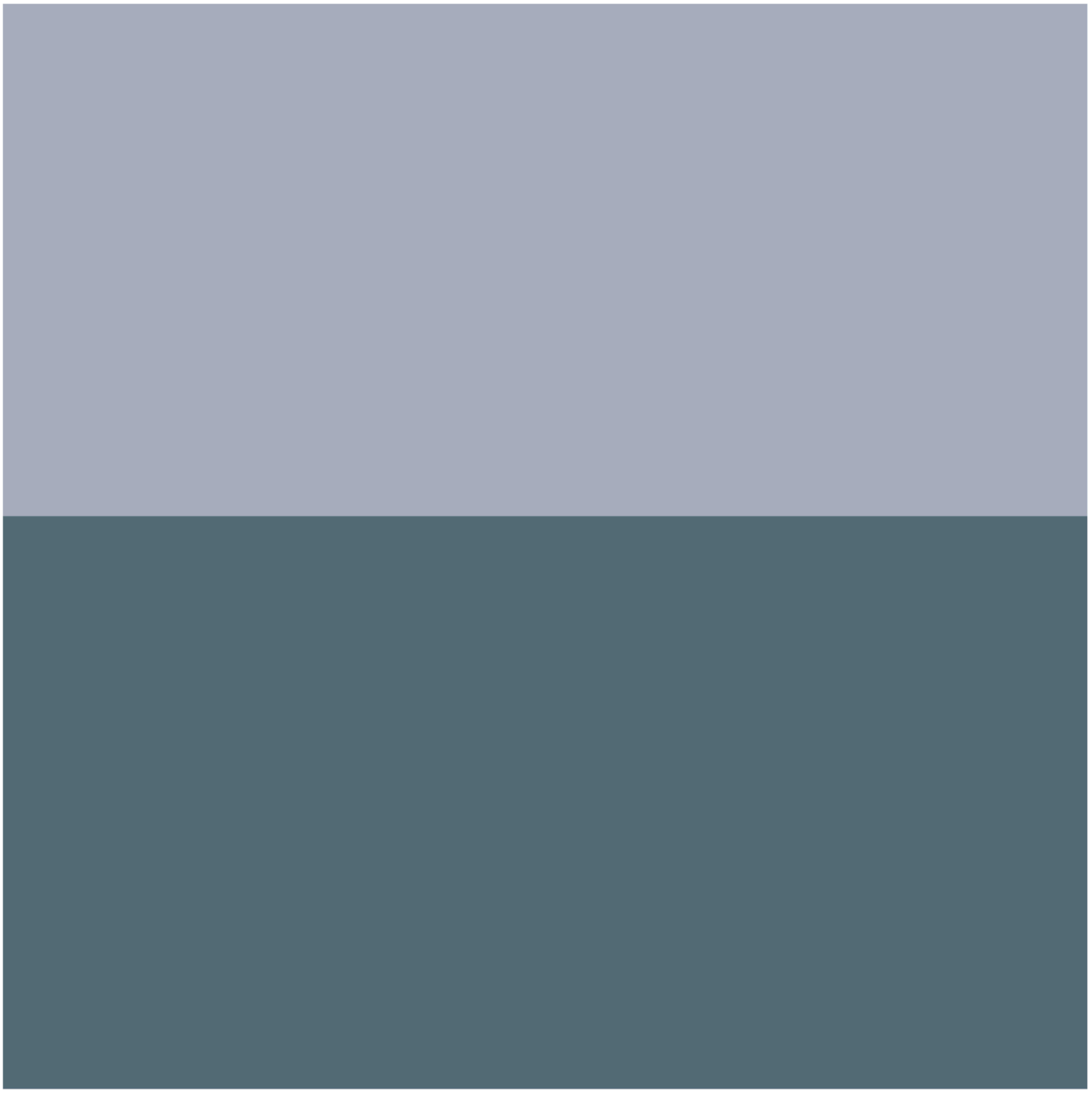
Forced Empathy Score

2011
C-print on canvas
100 x 100 cm



Harbour View

2011
C-print on canvas
100 x 100 cm



‘Forced Empathy’ at Experimenta 2011, Sharjah Foundation 2012 and Hong Kong Eye (Artistree) 2013

BIOGRAPHY

JOÃO VASCO PAIVA

Born in Portugal, 1979.
Lives and works in Hong Kong.

Education

2006-2008	Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Media, School of Creative Media, City University of Hong Kong, Awarded with Distinction
2000-2004	Fine Arts Degree, Escola Superior Artistica do Porto

Solo Exhibitions

2015	Mausoleum, Encounters, Art Basel Hong Kong, Hong Kong
	Counter Space, Zurich, Switzerland
2014	Cast Away, Casa Garden- Fundaçao Oriente, Macao
2013	Near and Elsewhere, Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong
	Objects Encrypted, Goethe Institute, Hong Kong
2011	Palimpseptic, Saamlung Gallery, Hong Kong
	Forced Empathy- Anchored Monument I, Experimenta, Hong Kong
2010	Sea of Mountains, Para/Site Central, Hanart Tz Gallery, Hong Kong
	Experiments on the Notation of Shapes, Input Output Gallery, Hong Kong
	Chirps, Fuse A.I.R., Videotage, Hong Kong

Selected Group Exhibitions

2015	LANDSEASKY, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangdong, China
	Invisible Light, Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong
2014	VAFA, Art For All Society/Orient Foundation, Macau
	A few reasons for a non dismissive art, Laboratorio das Artes, Museu Natural da Electricidade de Seia; Campo Arqueologico de Mertola – Casa Amarela; Museu de Portimao; Museu Nacional Ferroviario, Portugal
	Gestern, Lichtenberg Studios, Berlin, Germany
	Landseasky, Artsonje Center, Seoul, South Korea; travelling to OCT Contemporary Art Terminal, Shanghai, China; MAAP, Brisbane, Australia; Guangzhou Museum, Guangzhou, China
	The Part in the Story, Witte de With, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
	Latent Spaces, Haw Par Villa, Singapore
2013	Vladivostok Biennale, Vladivostok, Russia
	Paper Rain, Art Basel Hong Kong, Hong Kong
	Hong Kong Eye, Artistree, Hong Kong
	Decelarator, European House of Art of Upper Bavaria, Freising, Germany
	Living as Art Form, The Nomadic Version, New York, USA
2012	Hong Kong Eye, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK
	Living as Art Form, Videotage, Hong Kong
	Performing the Archipelago, Sping Workshop+Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong
	rites, thoughts, notes, sparks, swings, strikes. a hong kong spring, Para/Site Art Space, Hong Kong
	What should I do to live your life, Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE
	The 4th Sate of Water, C.o.C.A., Torun, Italy
	The Script Road, Court of Justice, Macao
2011	Future Nostalgia, Shenzen Architecture Biennale, Idutang Project Space, Shenzhen, China
	Immersive Surfaces, Dumbo Arts Festival, Brooklyn, New York
	The Creators Project, Ullens Center of Contemporary Art, Beijing
	Collective Consciousness, OV Gallery, Shanghai
	Seoul International New Media Festival, Seoul
	New Media Archeology II, Videotage, Hong Kong
	Unit for Sound Practice and Research, Goldsmiths University, London
	Nuits Sonores, Museum of Contemporary Art, Lyon
	Writing of the Wall, Kunsthalle Kowloon, ArtHK, Hong Kong
	New Media Archeology, Videotage, ArtHK, Hong Kong
	Imaginary Belongings, Museu do Oriente, Lisbon
	Special Projects, Hong Kong Artwalk, Hong Kong
	AllanNederpelt Gallery, Brooklyn, New York
	Decelarator, Sur La Montagne, Berlin
	Decelarator,Videospace, Budapest
	Double Happiness, Meet Factory, Prague
	Writing Machine Collective, Y-Square, Hong Kong
2010	Experimenta Mostra de Video Arte, SESC Sao Paulo, Campinas
	Against Easy Listening, 1a Space, Hong Kong
	The Creators Project, 798 Space, Beijing
	Cross City Experience, BEAF, Brisbane

	A Story of Siamese Cities, Doublehappiness Studio, Hong Kong
	Sigma, Osage Gallery, Hong Kong
	The Conditional Form of the Real, Garage Centre for Contemporary Culture, Moscow
	Moscow International Young Art Biennial, National Centre for Contemporary Arts, Moscow
	Hong Kong Biennial Awards, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong
	Art Beijing, Beijing
	Unmeasured Music, Input/Output Gallery, Hong Kong
2009	Microwave International New Media Art Festival, Hong Kong
	London International Festival of Exploratory Music, London
	Architecture is Discourse with Music Festival, Hong Kong Cultural Center, Hong Kong
	Cities of Desire, Arts Centre, Pao Galleries, Hong Kong
	FILE Hypersonica International Festival of Electronic Language, Sao Paulo
	Experimenta, Hong Kong
	Athens Video Art Festival, Athens
2008	Cities of Desire, CityTransit, Vienna
	Waterland Kwanying, 2Kolegas, Beijing, China
	Hong Kong & Shenzhen Architecture and Urbanism Biennial, Hong Kong
2007	2pi Festival, Hangzhou, China
	Shanghai Street Artspace, Hong Kong
2005	Bienal Internacional de Cerveira, Vila Nova de Cerveira, Portugal
	Ponto de Situação, Maus Habitos, Porto, Portugal

Grants, Awards, Residencies

2014	Residency at Lichtenberg Studios, Berlin
2012	International Artist Support Grant, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Portugal
2011	Emerging Artist Grant, Hong Kong Arts Development Council, Hong Kong
2010	Hong Kong Biennial Awards, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong
	Fuse Artist in Residence, Videotage , Hong Kong
2009	Best Creative Work Award, Highjacking Public Spaces, InMedia, Hong Kong
2006/2008	Recipient of Investigation Scholarship, Orient Foundation, Portugal

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