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2022

THOMAS TEURLAI SELECTION OF PROJECTS

"I speak into the emptiness and in the dark; however, even if it is only for me, I will continue to insult the insulters." Jean Genet, The Criminal Child, 1949

"A book must be the axe for the frozen sea inside us." Franz Kafka, Letter to Oskar Pollak, 1904

He breaks in. If there was only one sentence to say about Thomas Teurlai's work, it would be this one. Even then it would be important to insist on the duration value of the present tense here: "he is breaking in, he can't stop breaking in". The English are more particular and say it the other way around: breaking and entering. But French (for a change) is more accurate and puts the effect and consequence first.

When walking around one of his spaces - and sometimes even beforehand, when the visitor has not entered the presentation space yet but is already seized by an unusual smell or by the depth of a sound – it is this sensation that people will experience physically and immediately. Just as is if we ourselves were, spectators firmly stood behind the double glazing of our aesthetic conscience, the "private property" suddenly exposed: attacked from the outside.

It is pretty obvious that, in one form or another, the Atelier Teurlai runs on illegality. It is the (modified) engine of his invention. Whether it is turning into graffiti middlemen, along with Ugo Schiavi, rolled up in a warehouse like stolen rugs, or reinventing himself as a solitary gold washer of technological waste, or setting up a clandestine bar by hijacking radiators. And this permanent cinema of delinquency says first of all what a generation of artists thinks of the rules of the art market as defined by today's neoliberalism. But it is also the fact that at the imaginary heart of all these infractions, a law is indeed being infringed: the required distance between the work of art and its spectator. When facing a sculpture by Thomas Teurlai, I am robbed of my critical perspective. The piece hits me before I have time to prepare myself.

Seen from that angle, the work exhibited this spring at the Palais de Tokvo is quite central. This Grand Verre Sécurit (Big Safety Glass), vibrating every two minutes and increasingly exposing its fracture, is The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even, right at the mome when it breaks, in 1926, in a road traffic accident. But where transparency was decisive with Duchamp (= in charge of shifting the work of art/spectator relationship) and the accident was secondary, unforeseen and a posteriori rectified in the orb of significance, with Teurlai the order is reversed. The glass is only of interest to him because it can be broken - like the window of a luxury shop during a demonstration. And it is this very crack that then redefines the singular attachment between the work of art and its bachelors.

By blending into its own sabotage and its timed vandalism, the piece avoids the cycle of artistic merchandise (what Teurlai calls: "the ornament"). Or at least, it challenges its usual evidence. It sets the usual contemplation-possession dynamics against a link of a different nature, a more complex and paradoxical one. Here I am affected differently - both by the object and its destruction. Indeed, the sound that triggers the shaking of the plate is that of a Tibetan bowl usually used to free chakras. It is of course difficult to take this reference literally. But this mingling of Buddhist ritual and bar block vandalism really indicates the work's ambition which is to recreate the (antinomic) terms of a relationship. If there is such a thing as the art of breaking in, then the crack-as-link is its utopian horizon.

Of course, the convulsive beauty, or "explodingfixed" is an old trick of the history of avant-gardes. But something has changed recently in the way we understand this type of project. Digital imaging has indeed shown since The Matrix that it was really possible (against all expectations) to inhabit the moment of an explosion. That it was possible when a bullet was blasting through space, to bend one's body and look in order to calmly watch the deafenin grace of the projectile. And, more than video makers, it is young sculptors like Thomas Teurlai that have benefitted from such a deep visual experience by now conceiving their constructions like mobile images frozen in a circular timeframe. Visitors move around their work, sucked up in the invisible siphon of a bullet-time effect.

Indeed, before the Grand Verre (Big Glass) in the Palais de Tokyo, there had already been a Petit Verre (Small Glass) at the Villa Arson. It was then a simple wine glass that was spinning on a micro-tray. The artist, then still a student, would put a sort of plastic finger on its saliva moistened brim, like the tonearm of a turn table that would make it vibrate and resonate in space. It was only after having had left the room for a good while that the distinctive noise of the smashed glass could be heard, indicating from a distance that the centrifugal force had had the better of the unstable balance of the whole installation. By moving from the Small to the Big Glass, Thomas Teurlai has not just changed the scale of his work. Most importantly, he has managed to freeze – in a rotary slow motion - the crystalline air and the explosion, the beauty and its attack.

Patrice Blouin



Still (fire extinguisher, propane burner, alcoholic must), exhibition view, Villa Arson, Nice (France), 2011

PRESS ►II FOR VIDEO SHORT CIRCUIT 2014



Short circuit (beer bottle, micro-drip system, contact microphone, neon lights, sound system), Lisboa, 2014

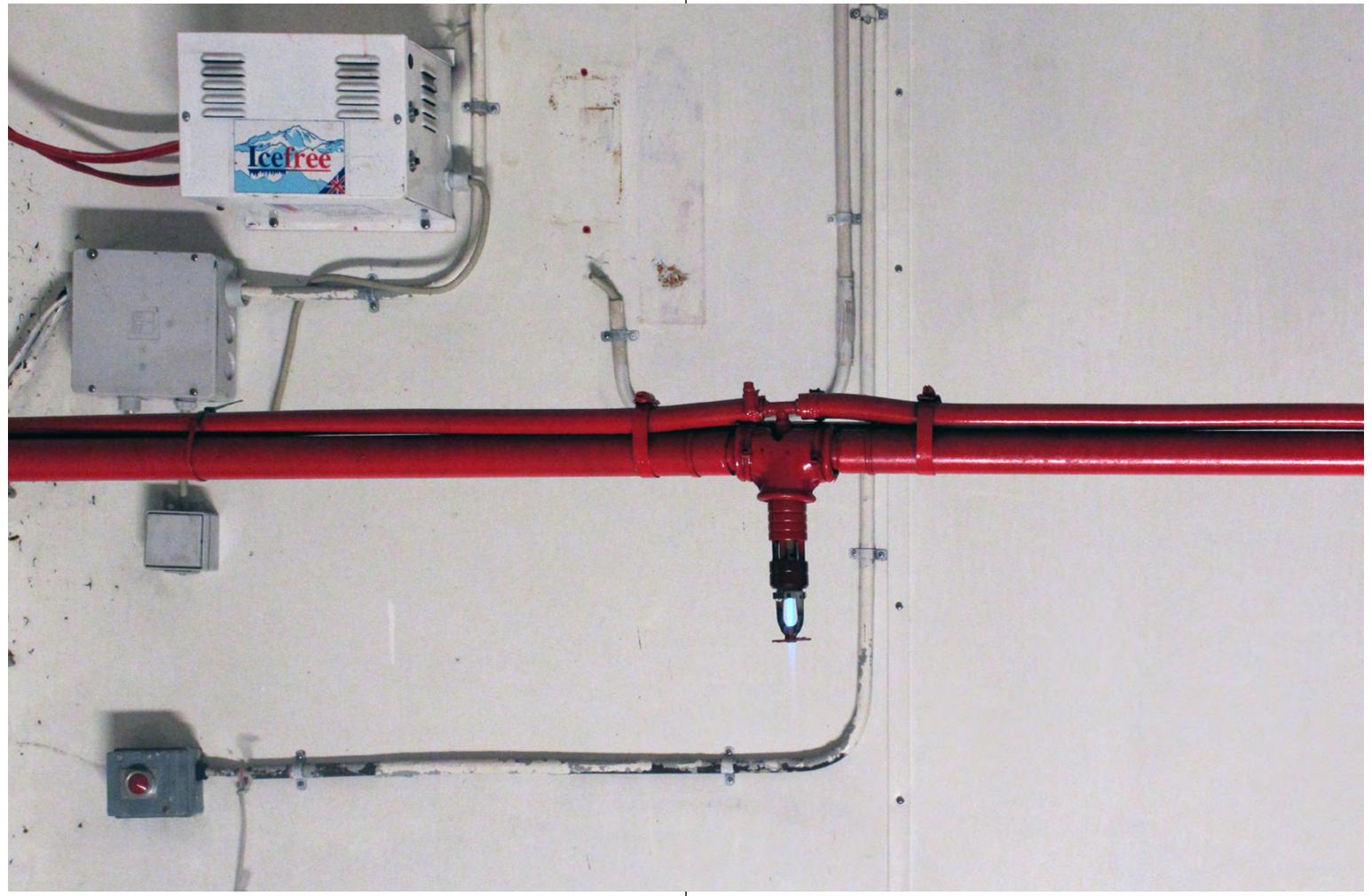


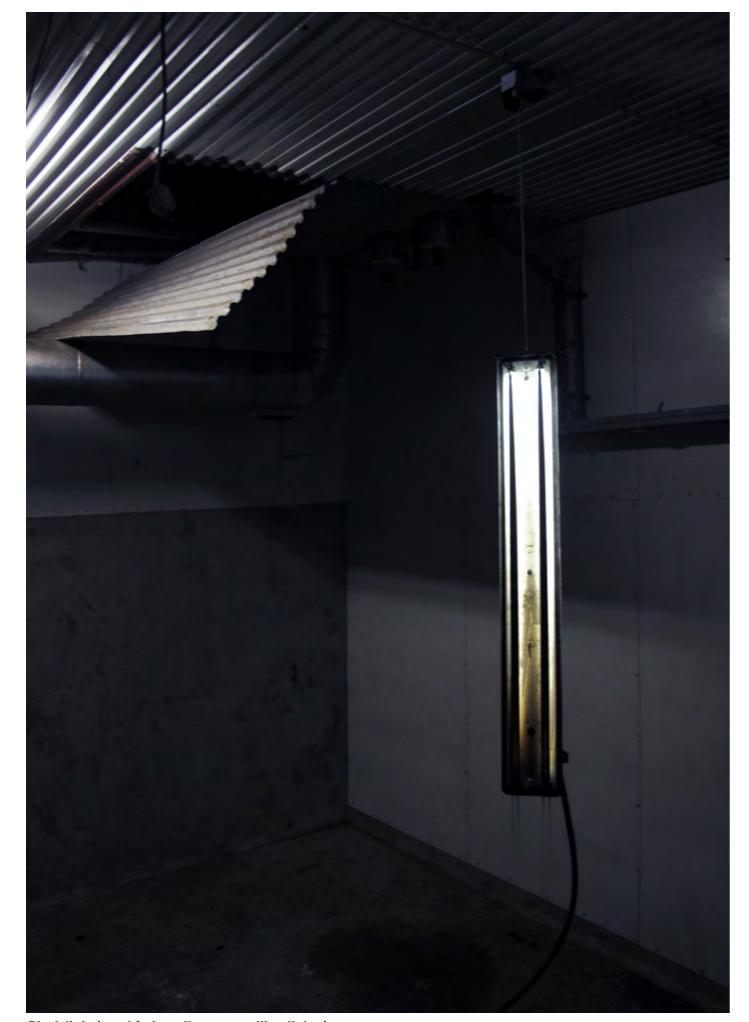
Short Circuit, detail, 2014

A beer bottle hangs upside-down from the ceiling's lights. Every drop spilled on their naked wires make the lights shatter until the liquid evaporates. A contact microphone amplify the sound of electric signal.

Curated by Francois Piron

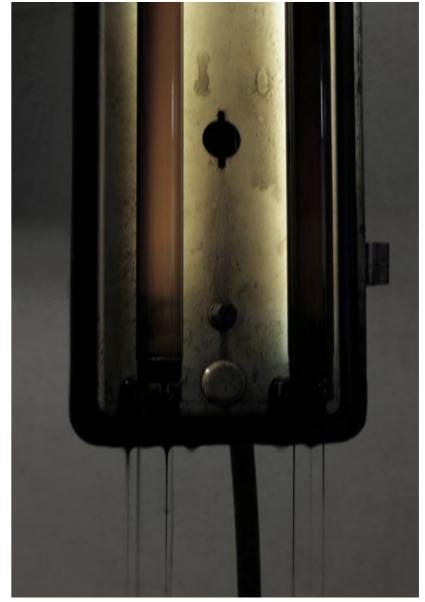






Black light (used frying oil, pump, ceiling lights)

FISH FACTORY 2012



Black light, detail, 2012

Chopper desk — The ceiling fan in the factory manager's office is lowered to brush against a microphone on his desk. The wind produced by the blades is amplified and the vibration is transmitted to the entire warehouse like the sound of an helicopter taking off.

Sprinklers — The nozzles of the fire-fighting system are modified and light up alternately, spitting small blue flames close to the heads of the audience.

Black light — Used cooking oil trickles down the ceiling lights, spreading a pungent odor and varying the lighting of the space.



Hammam Amicus (car engine, chlorine tablets, uv lights, pneumatic arms, éléctronic timmer)

Exhibition view, squat La Toxic, Lyon (France), 2015



Hammam Amicus, detail, 2015



Hammam Amicus, detail, 2015

A well-being center is opened for a weekend in a Lyon squat. Sewer drains and freezers are turned into Jacuzzy. Heat and bubbles are generated by the engine of a car running in neutral.

Collaboration with Vincent Guillermin

EVIDENZA DI REATO 2023

«Evidenza di reato» is an installation created during a residency for the 43rd anniversary commemoration of the Ustica tragedy, an infamous plane wreck that happened in Italy in the early 80's.

At the foot of the wreckage of the DC-9, displayed in a warehouse in Bologna, four what appear to be small suitcases, four black boxes, are blinking.

They are inspired by the *camera obscura* of the Renaissance, devices developed by artists of that period to understand vision and light phenomena.

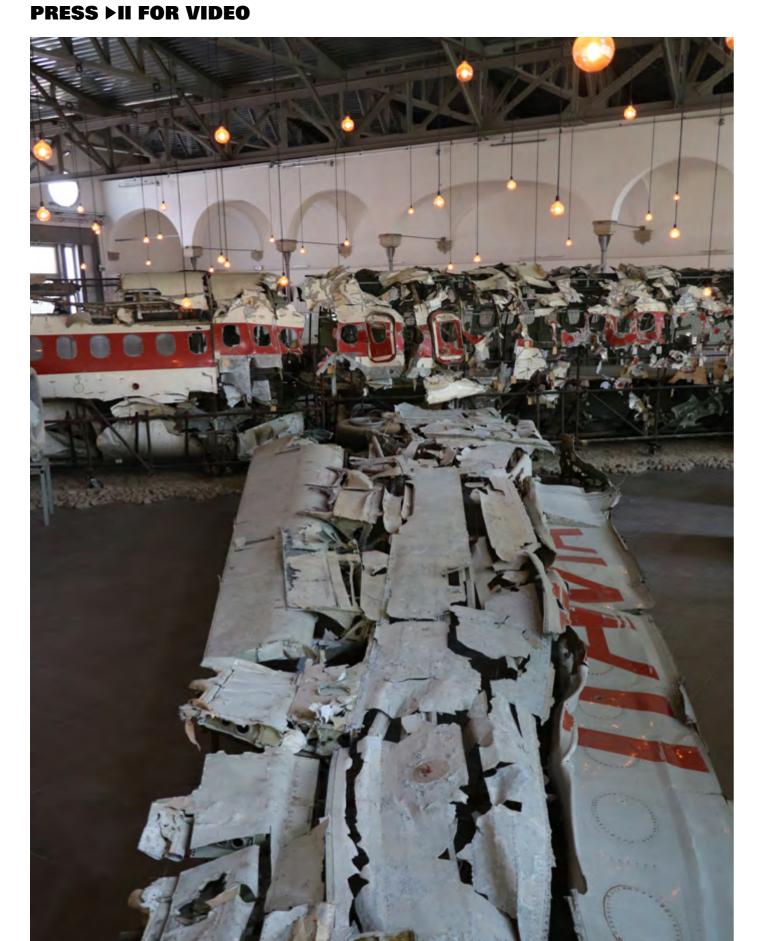
The boxes contain and project onto the warehouse arches the inverted image of small fragments from the crash, retrieved from the stock of evidence held by the judicial police.

Working at the foot of the plane's massive carcass and in collaboration with the victims' families imposed a certain humility.

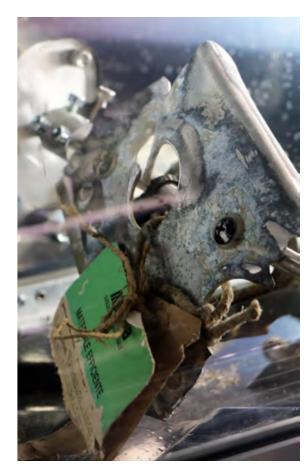
The chosen fragments are deliberately mundane in appearance. A seatbelt buckle, the handle of a sliding porthole shutter, a kerosene injector, a single-use sachet containing sugar, plastic cutlery, and a finger-wipe, etc...

Rotating on themselves in a perpetual motion, these flying fragments evoke the final scene of Antonioni's "Zabriskie Point." A flight suspended in eternity like a slow-motion explosion.

The four black boxes, although created for the memorial, are intended to travel. To carry with them and give visibility to these fragments and the memory of this story.



Wreckage of the DC-9 on display at the memorial, Bologna, 2023.



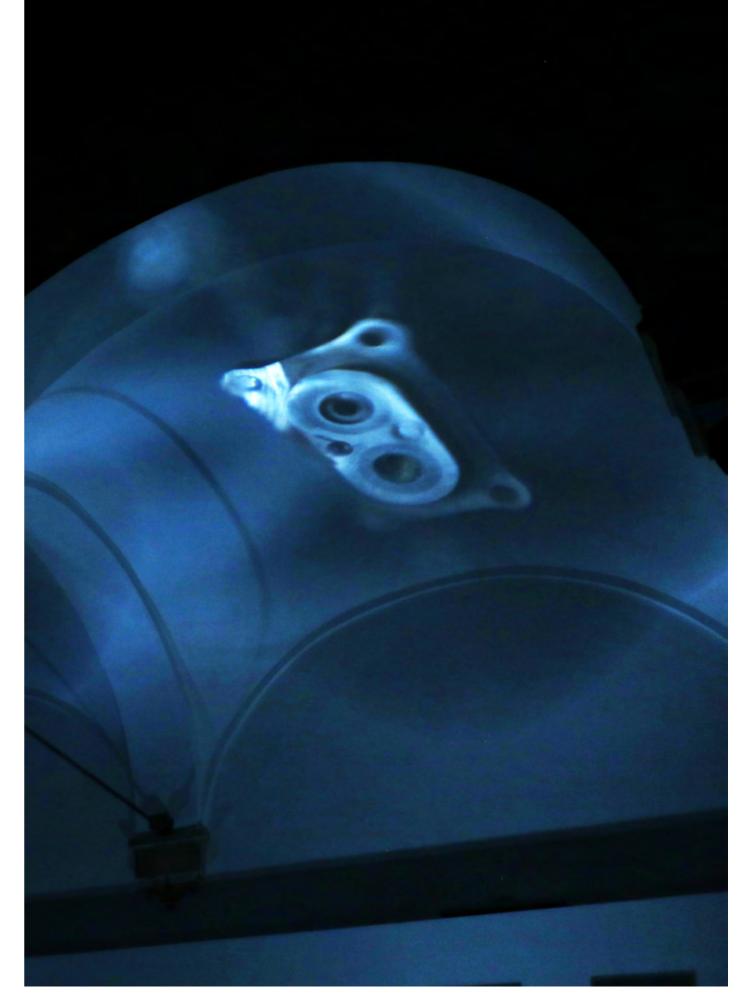


View of black box number 3 with seatbelt buckle and single-use sachet, Museo per la memoria di Ustica, Bologna, 2023.

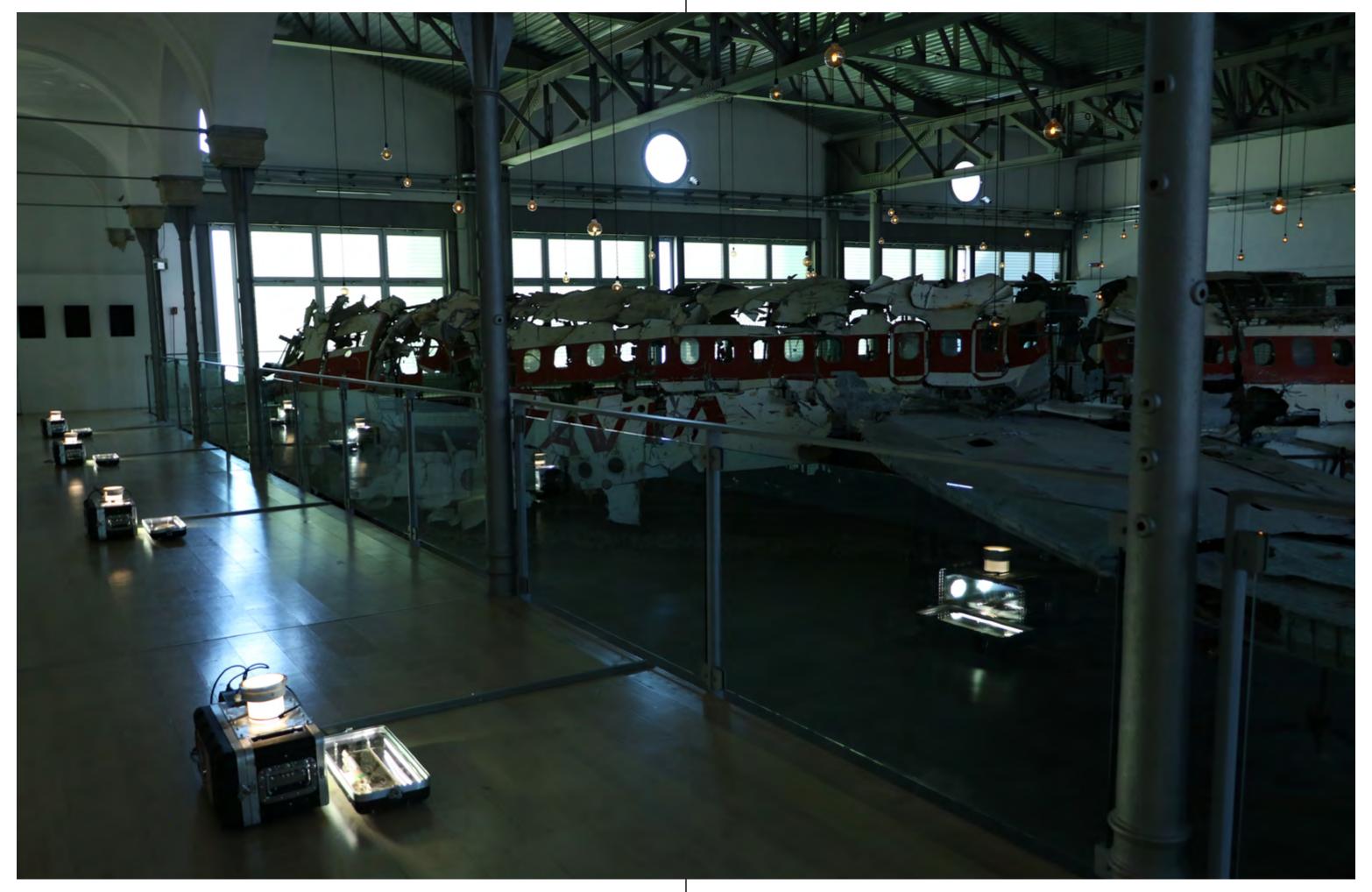


Exhibition view with projections on the warehouse arches, Museo per la memoria di Ustica, Bologna, 2023.

EVIDENZA DI REATO 2023



Projection of the Kerosene Injector, Museo per la memoria di Ustica, Bologna, 2023.



View of the four black boxes with the aircraft wreckage in the background, Museo per la memoria di Ustica, Bologna, 2023.



Camping sauvage (liquid clay, fabrics, wood fire)



Camping sauvage, detail, 2013

CAMPING SAUVAGE 2013



Camping sauvage, detail, 2013

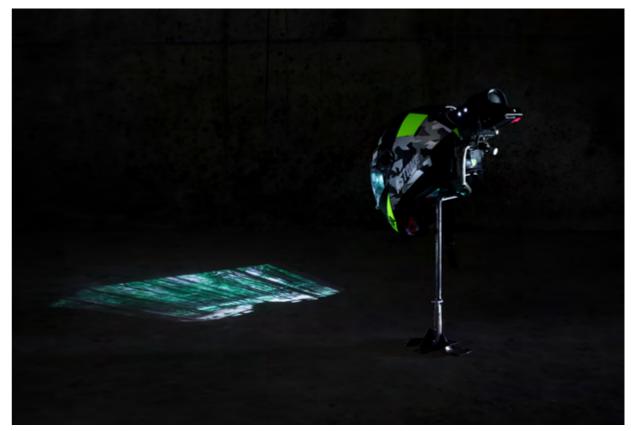
A camping tent is dipped in liquid clay from a nearby salted lake. It is then lit like local traditional adobe construction.





Providenzad, detail, 2021. Photo: © Salim Santa Lucia

PROVIDENZAD 2021



Providenzad, detail, 2021. Photo: © Salim Santa Lucia

A patched-up motorcycle helmet is displayed on the ground, like a ritual mask. At regular intervals snow and crackling signal the start of a message that we guess comes from another time. Scratches and roughness of the visor reveal then the images of a nocturnal road movie.

Collaboration with Alain Damasio



Europium (electronic waists, scaffolding, various acid preparations, liquid clay)



Europium, detail, 2014

EUROPIUM 2014



Europium, detail, 2014



Plague stick (propane torch, cast aluminum finger)

P.A.P.R. - POWERED AIR PURIFYING RESPIRATOR

2020



Baise-en-ville (cartridges, thermos, 12 volts ventilators, lithium battery, electronic components, Tiger Balm, salvia)

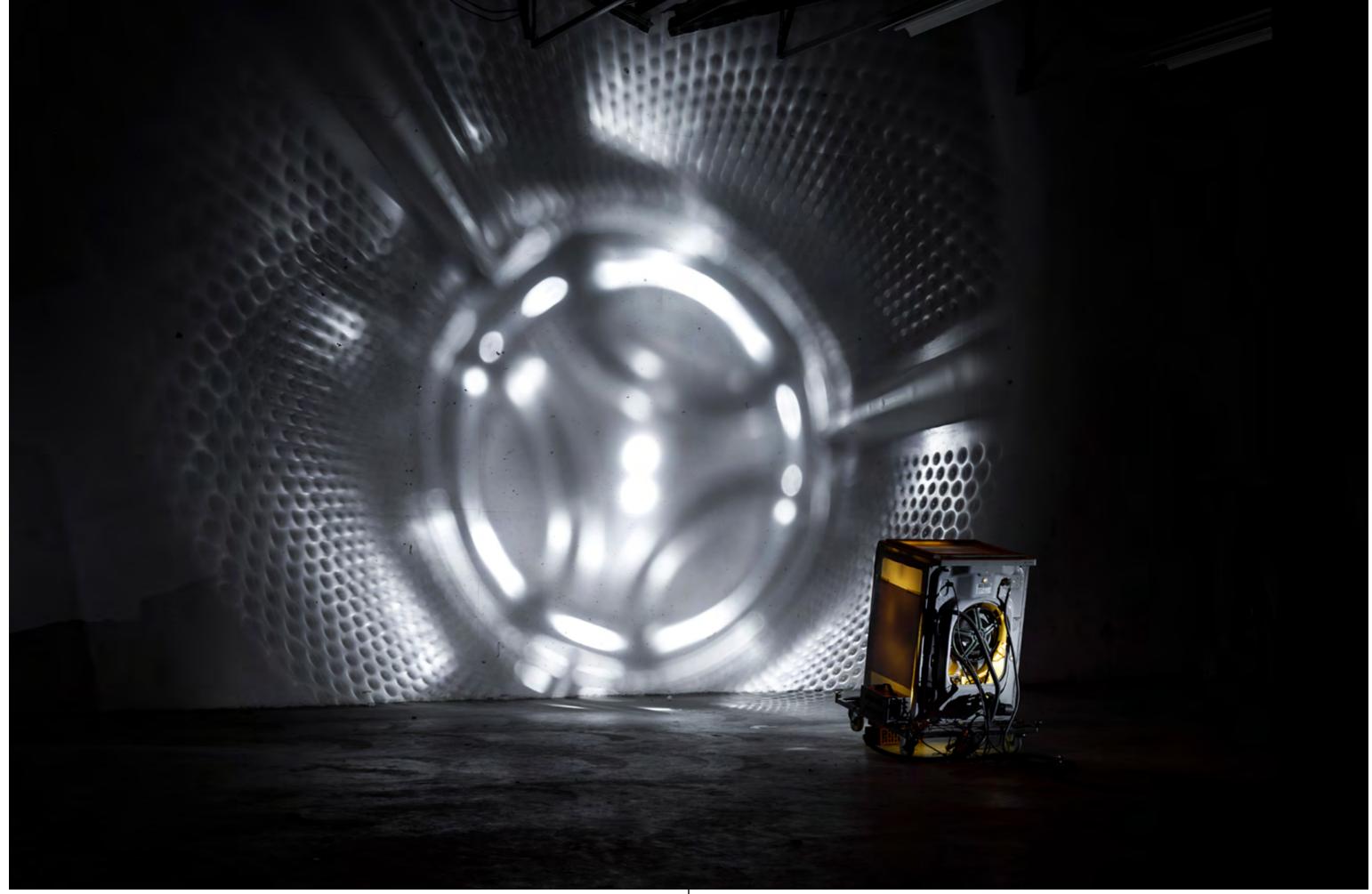


Googles (rubber mask, bandana, fast clips, clocksmith glasses, cast aluminum dog jaws)

P.A.P.R. - POWERED AIR PURIFYING RESPIRATOR

P.A.P.R. is a set of objects made during the first confinement. Inspired by the medieval plague doctor, these barrier-objects were more intended to counter boredom than murderous germs. Turn the contents of a trash can into escape scenario.

2020





Washing Skope, detail, 2021. Photo: © Salim Santa Lucia

WASHING SKOPE 2021



Washing Skope, detail, 2021. Photo: © Salim Santa Lucia

A washing machine is turned into a camera obscura. Depending on the cycle chosen, delicate, heavily soiled, etc. The inverted image of the drum is projected onto the wall for the duration of the wash. Contact and magnetic microphones positioned on its various parts make the mechanical noise of its entrails resonate in a progressive mix.



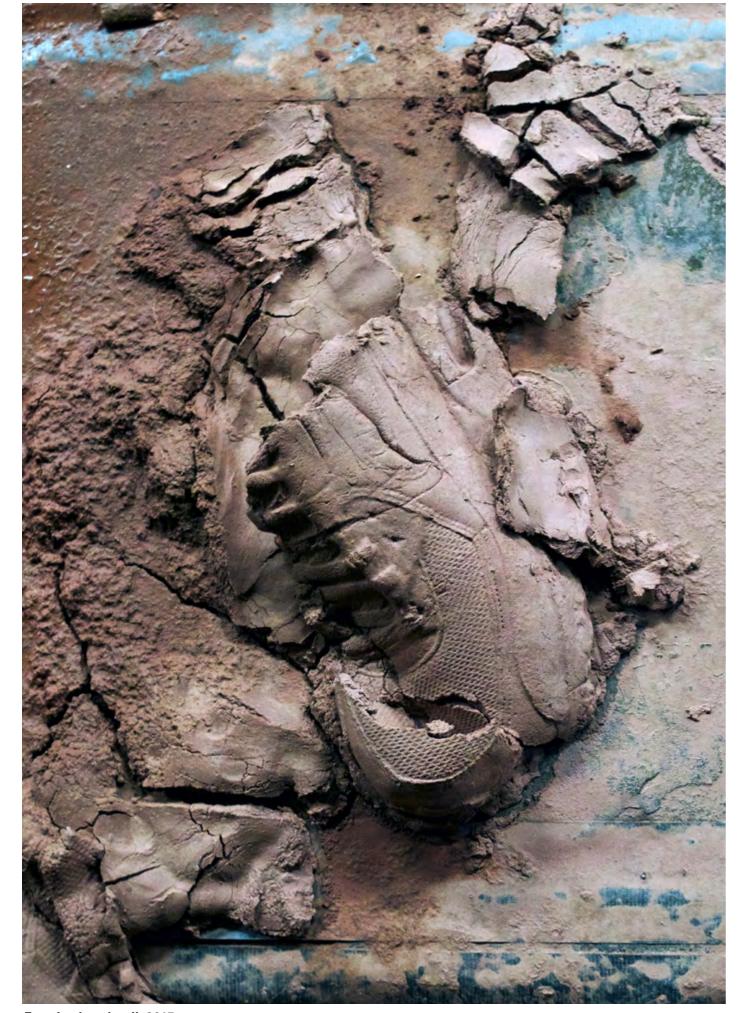


Foot Locker, detail, 2015

FOOT LOCKER 2015



Foot Locker, detail, 2015



Foot Locker, detail, 2015

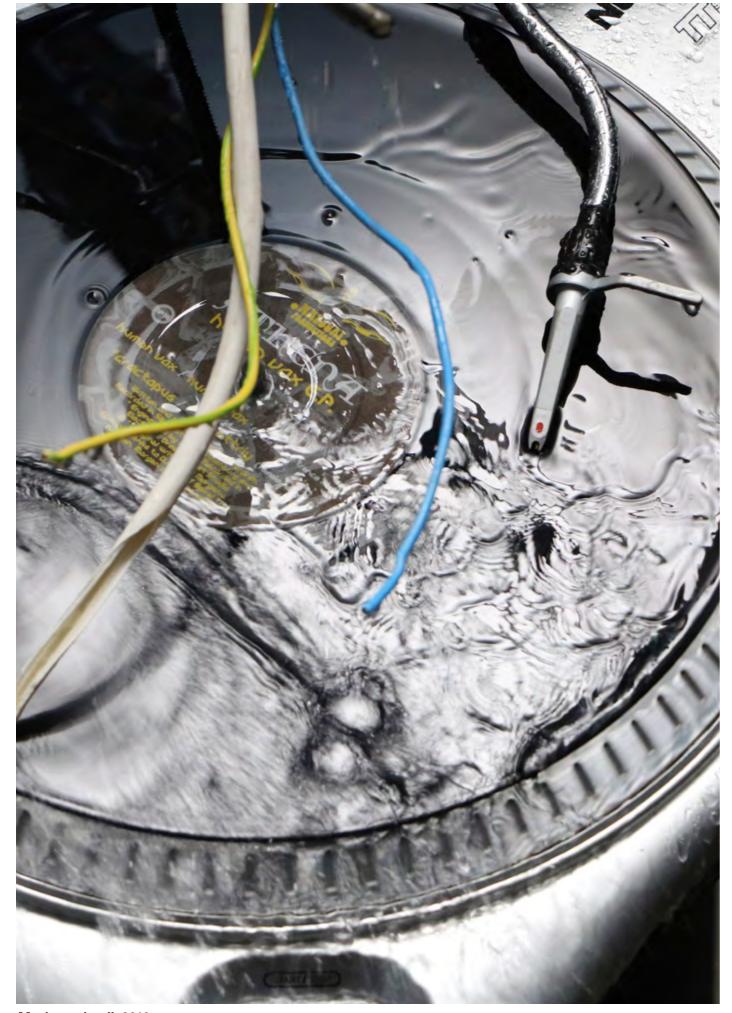
FOOT LOCKER 2015

In an abandoned factory, mud escapes from drain pipes. This mud flows into molds of baseball caps and sneakers. The prints thus drawn are fired over in a makeshift oven and placed on displays like in the famous store.

Curated by Joseph Shakevitz



Mash-up (modified italian shower, strobe light, peristaltic water pump, turntable, sound system)



Mash-up, detail, 2019

2019 **MASH-UP**



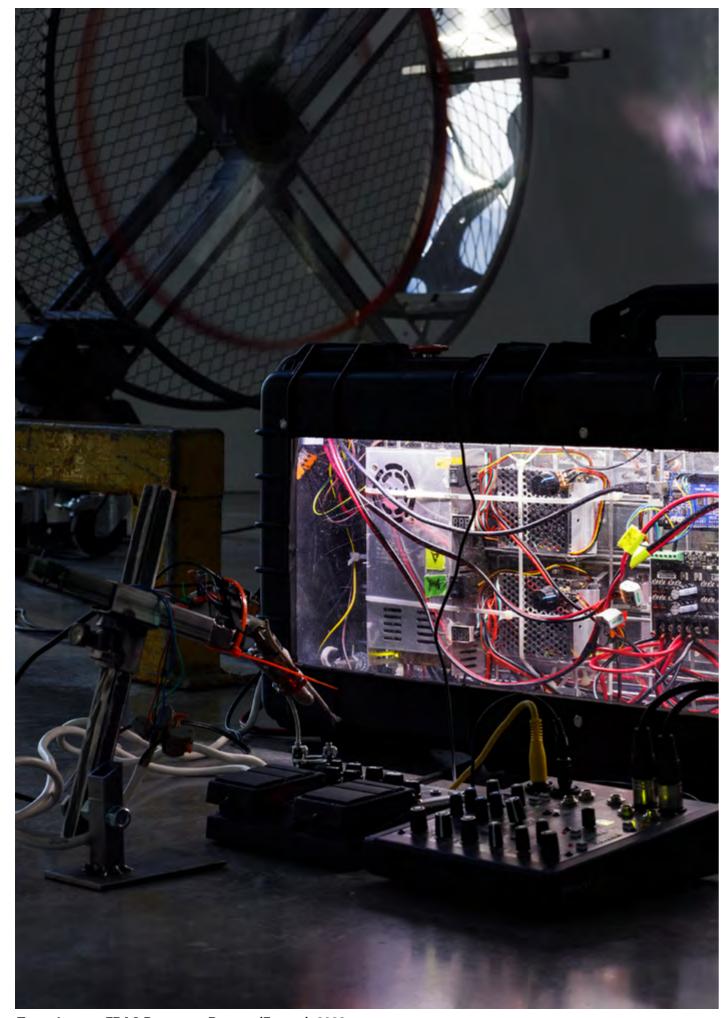
Mash-up, detail, 2019

An Italian shower cabin sits in the center of the room. and compresses. After a few minutes of operation, A motion detector triggers the machinery. Pump, amplifier, strobe light up: laboriously the water flows from the knob and activates the reverse rotation of a Trance music vinyl. Drums and voices sound backwards. Depending on the strength of the stream and the micro scratches, the sound varies and an improvised mix is deployed. The strobe light synchronizes with the water flow, it seems that time stretches

a mist forms on the glass doors and we can less and less distinguish this hanging body which groans. The macaron fidgets like in an anemic cinema, diffuses subliminal messages. We think of too long a night, too short a sleep. An inverted baptism. The postulate that by plunging the head long enough under hot water you can listen to your hair grow.



2022

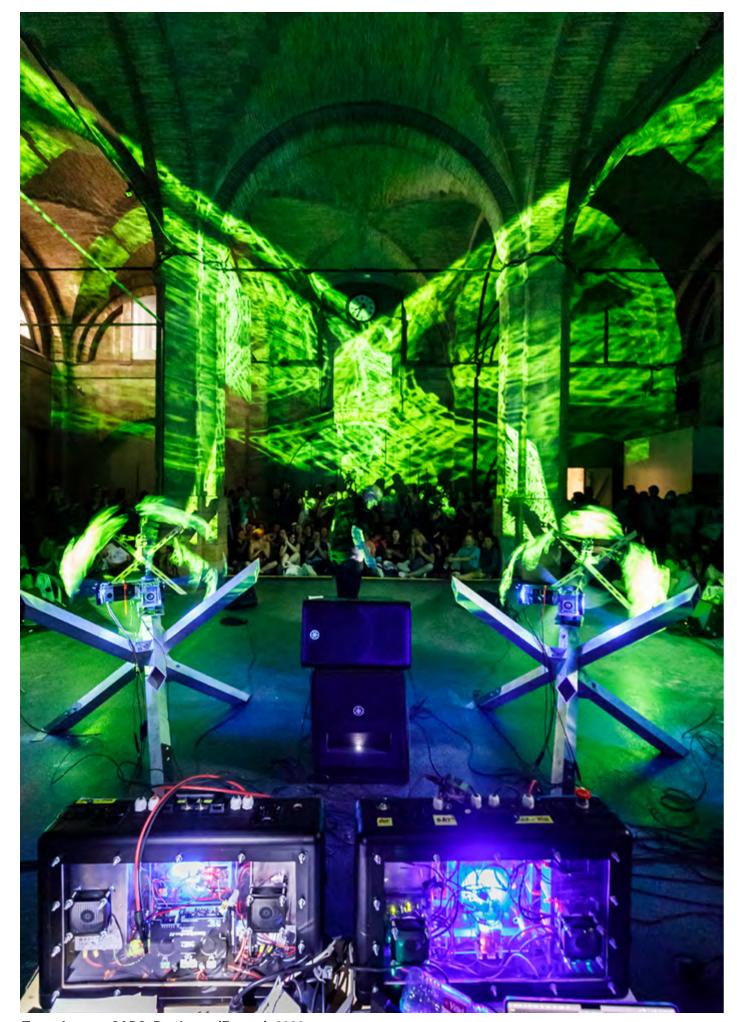


Transchrones, FRAC Bretagne, Rennes (France), 2022

TRANSCHRONES 2022



Transchrones, FRAC Bretagne, Rennes (France), 2022



Transchrones, CAPC, Bordeaux (France), 2022

TRANSCHRONES 2022



Transchrones, CAPC, Bordeaux (France), 2022

Transchrones is a magic lantern of the 21st century that compacts images, music and voices into a single machine to unravel, to release them in a fiction that speaks. As much by the voice of the writer Alain Damasio, creator of the story and performer of his words as by the organic power of the images, the drone of the engines, the rattling of the gears and the incessant vibration of the blades. It's all about rhythm — the speaker's phrasing, the mechanics echoing, the liquid flow of the videos and the immanent beat that squirts from the armatures.



Bootlegg (train parts foundry molds, propane torch, melted plastic chairs, motor, vinyl playhead)



Bootlegg, exhibition view, Villa Arson, Nice, 2015

JAMBE DE BOTTE 2015



Bootlegg, exhibition view, Villa Arson, Nice, 2015



Bootlegg, creation process, 2015



Bootlegg, creation process, 2015

500 garden chairs are melted down with a makeshift flame thrower. The toxic chewing gum thus obtained is poured into train parts casts. The assembled prints are displayed like some fossil space debris. The central sculpture turns on itself, and a vinyl playhead plays its roughness, echoing a distant bombing sound in the museum.

Collaboration with Diane Blondeau and Vivien Roubaud

2011-2021





Loots, detail, 2011

LOOTS 2011-2021



Loots, detail, 2011



Loots, detail, 2011

LOOTS 2011-2021



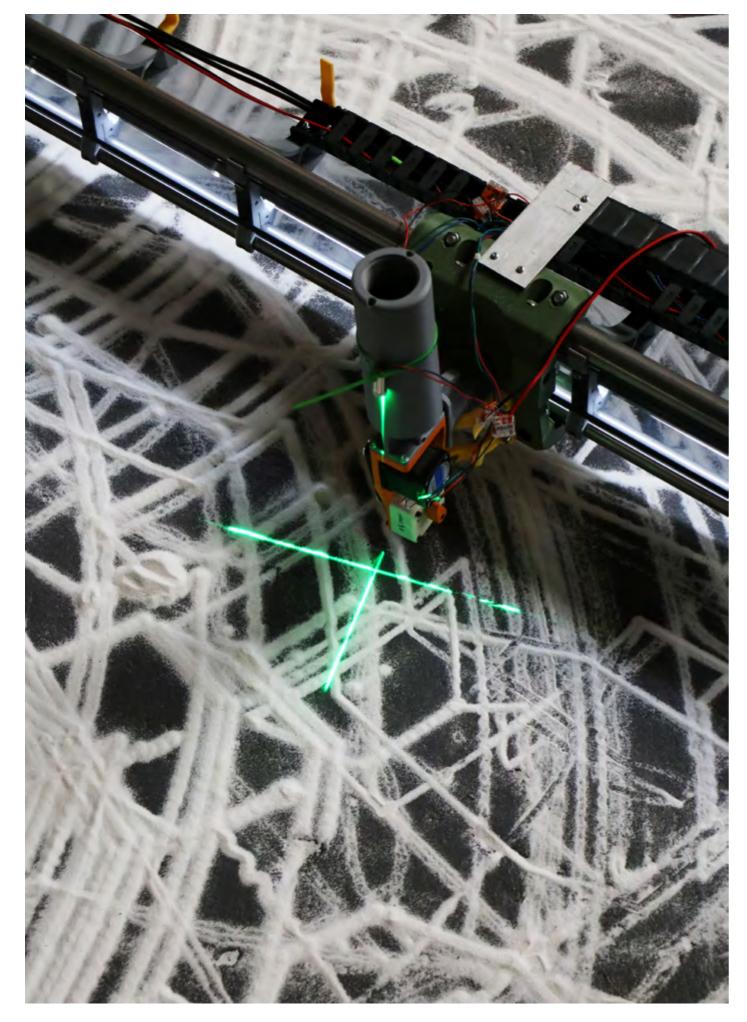
Loots, detail, 2011

Since 2011, graffiti has been regularly poached, their skin torn from the walls with steam and kitchen knives. The stolen paintings are then rolled up like rugs and stored in crates like an archive of postapocalyptic street art.

Collaboration with Ugo Schiavi



View of the machine in its circular version, FRAC Bretagne, 2024.

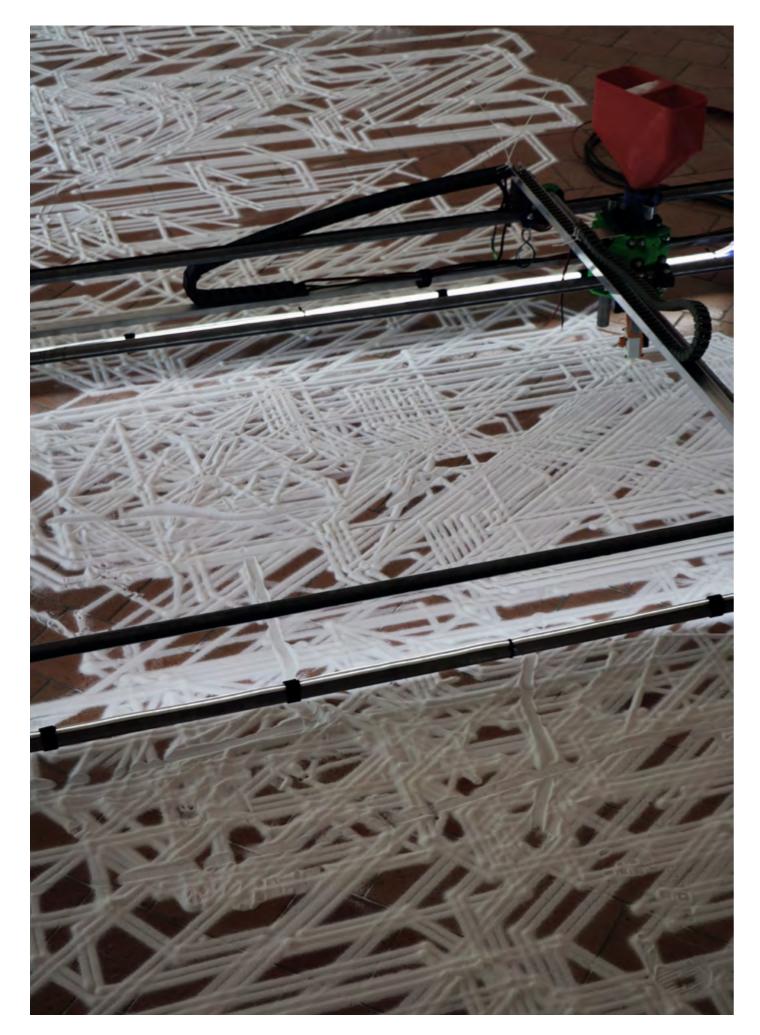


View of the machine in its circular version, FRAC Bretagne, 2024.

BUDDHIST BOT 2025

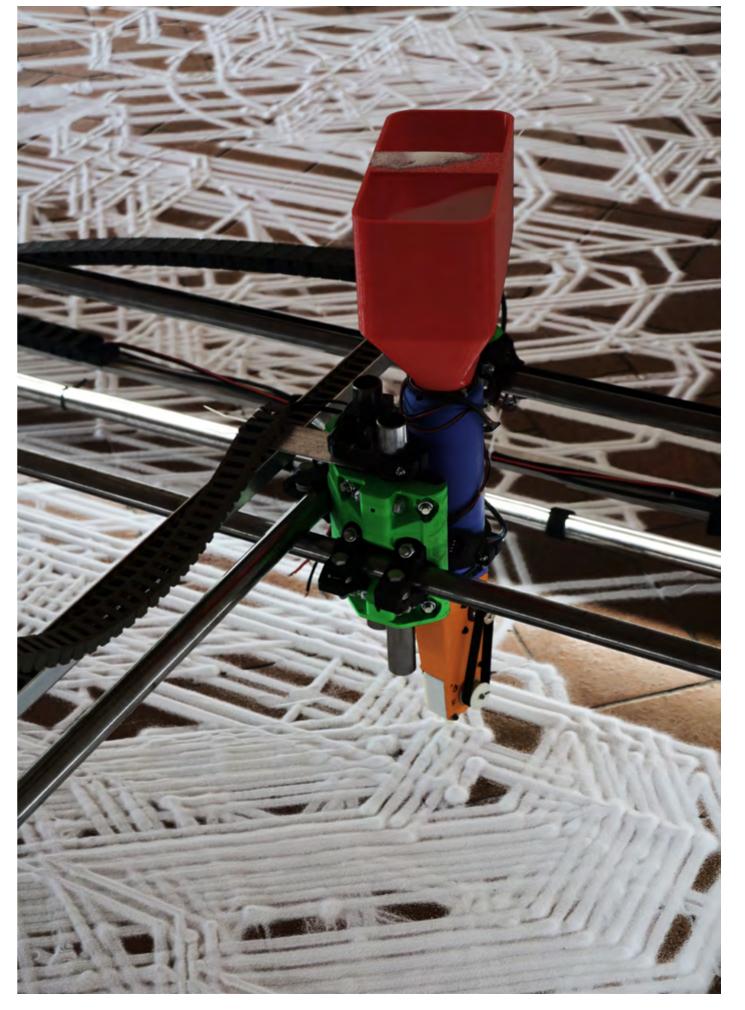


Buddhist Bot is a single machine tool that traces sand patterns on the ground. This repurposed digital milling machine—an emblematic tool of mass production—is transformed here into an animated sculpture, a generator of contemplative gestures. It draws labyrinthine figures, looped traces, lines that are both complex and devoid of function, blending algorithmic precision and random accidents. Inspired by Buddhist mandalas, those ephemeral sand artworks created during meditative rituals, each pattern appears as a suspended drawing, destined to disappear.



View of the machine in its square version, Musée Robert Tatin, 2024.

BUDDHIST BOT 2025

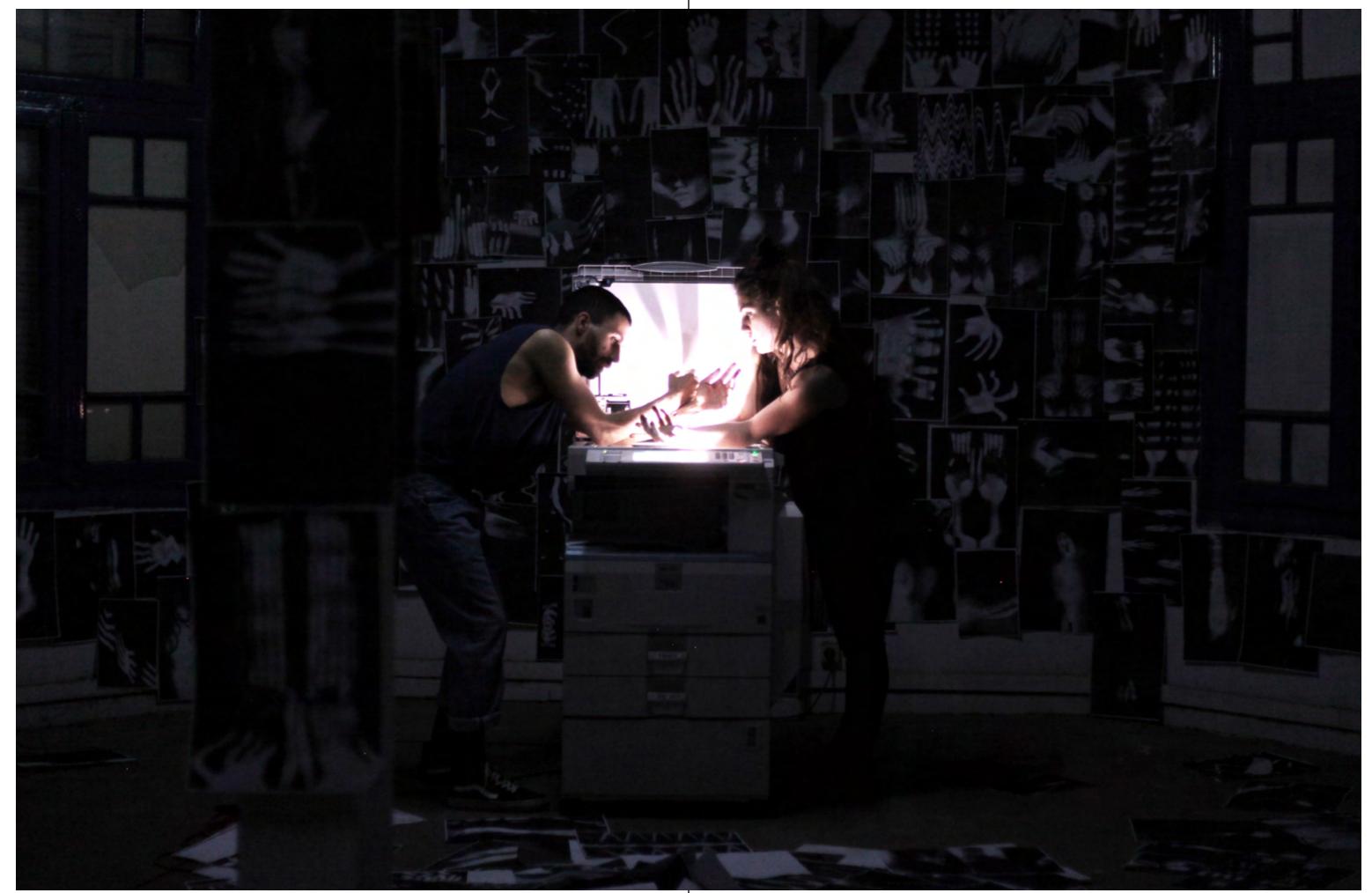


Detail of the sand dispenser, Musée Robert Tatin, 2024.

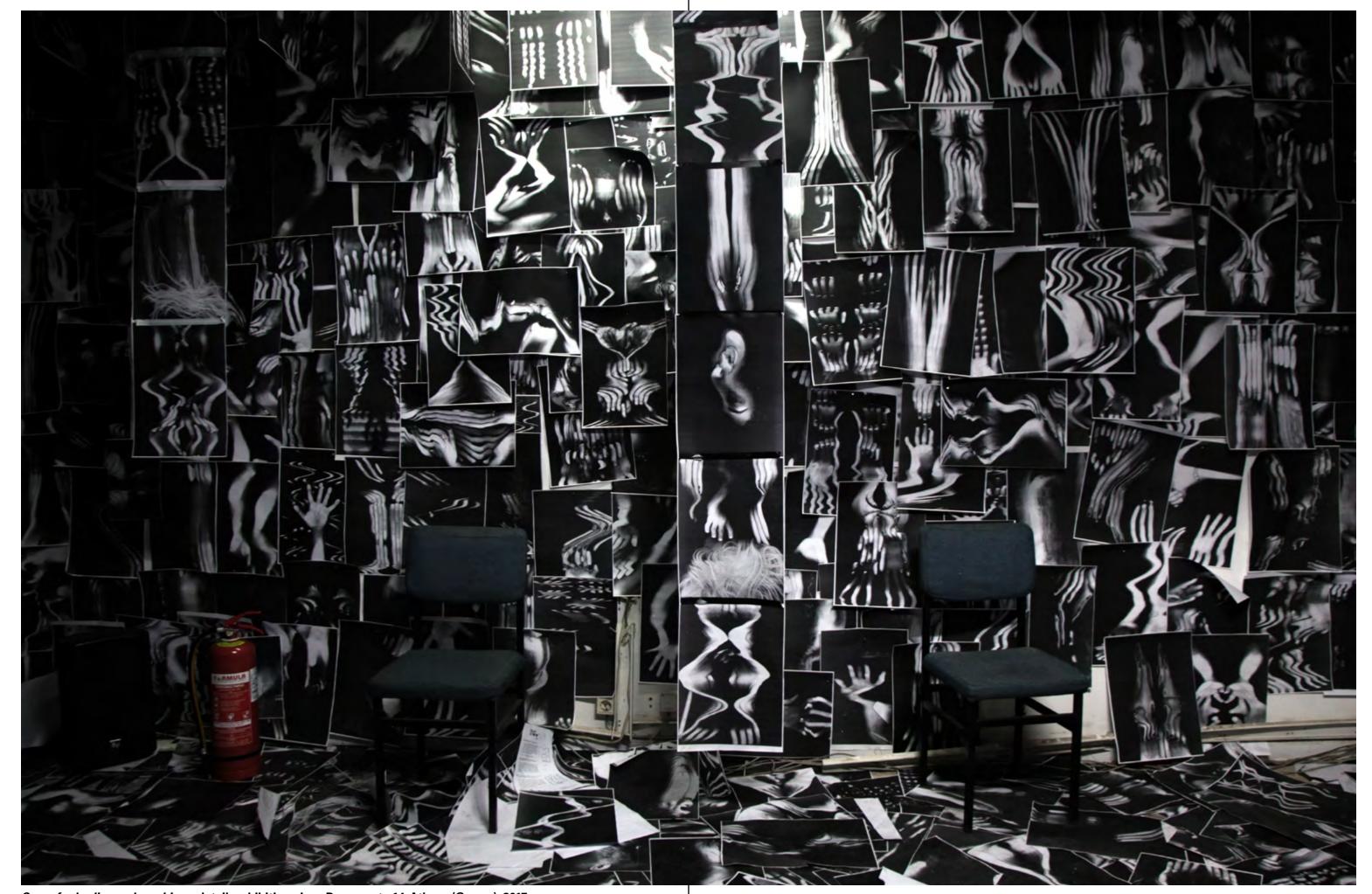


Score for bodies and machines (copy machines, magnetic microphones, sound system, A3 paper reams)

Curated by Ange Leccia and Fabien Danesi, exhibition view, Documenta 14, Athens (Greece), 2017



Score for bodies and machines, creation process, 2017



Score for bodies and machines, detail, exhibition view, Documenta 14, Athens (Greece), 2017



Score for bodies and machines, creation process, 2017

SCORE FOR BODIES AND MACHINES



Score for bodies and machines, detail, 2017

Some magnetic microphones are plugged on some copy machines. Every time the dancers activate the machine, they execute a moove following the machine sensor making weird surealistics images of their body. The score thus created is hung on the walls like in a photo laboratory.

2017

Choregraphy by Stelios Tsatsos and Ioulia Zachari



Sarkos-Phagos (old fridges, concrete, bamboo scafoldings, robot arm, spray paint, water pump)



Sarkos-Phagos, detail, 2018

SARKOS-PHAGOS 2018

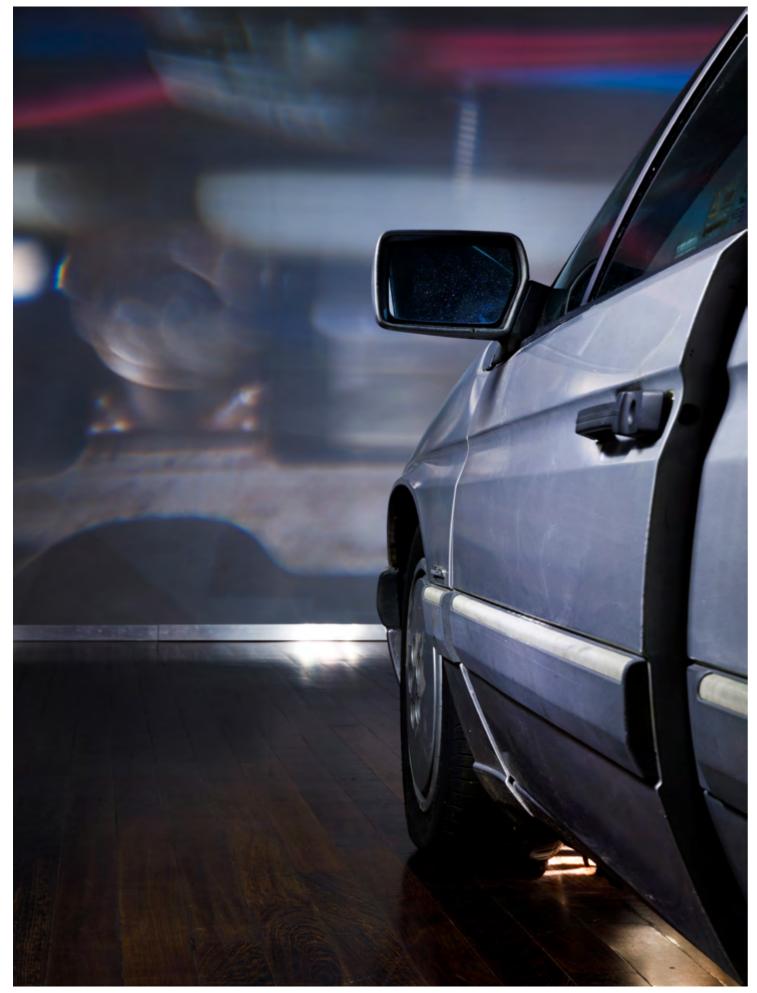


Sarkos-Phagos, detail, 2018

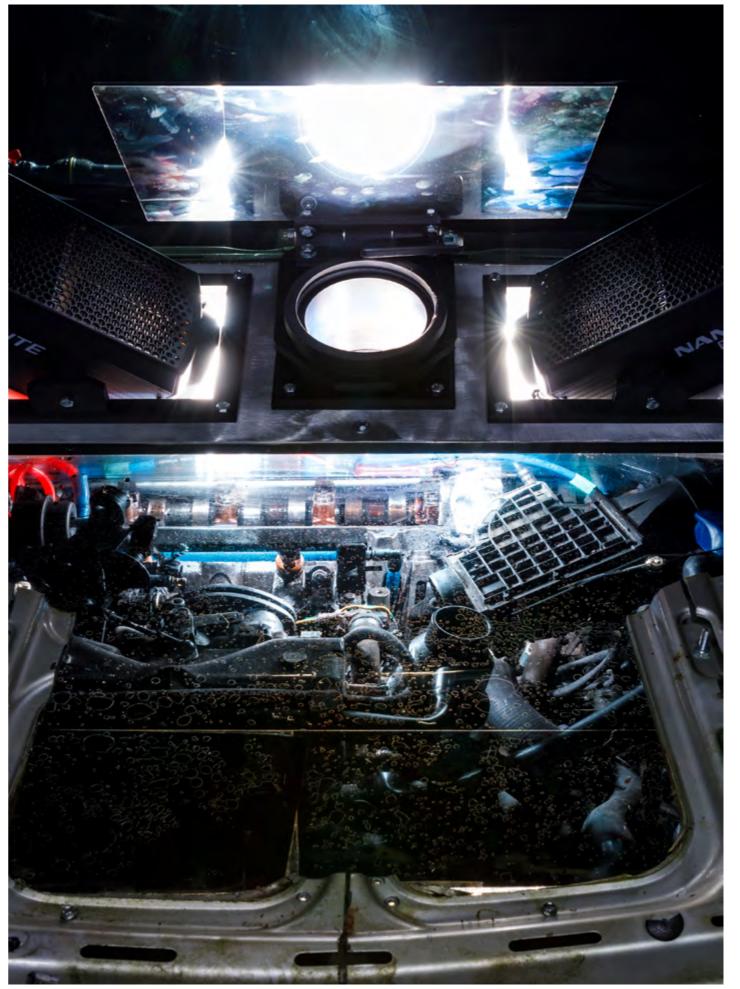
A rickety factory molds the inside of old refrigerators with concrete. The negatives obtained are as much sarkosphagus stacked like an amphitheater. A robotarm spray the air with fluo paint at regular intervals The concrete runoff forms stalactites, eventually trapping the entire structure like a petrifying river.

Curated by Jean de Loisy

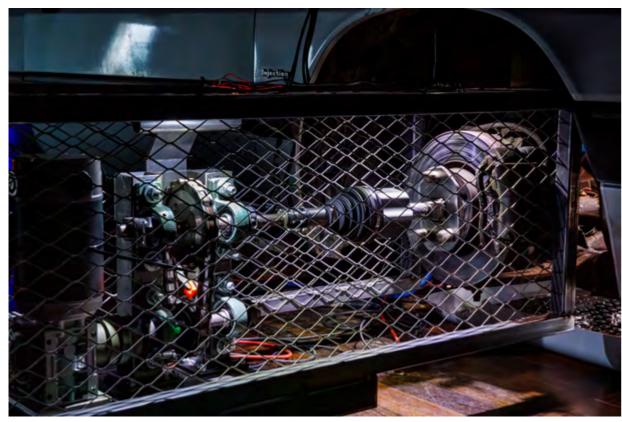




Fossile murmure, détail, 2024, Mac-val.



Fossile murmure, détail, 2024, Mac-val.

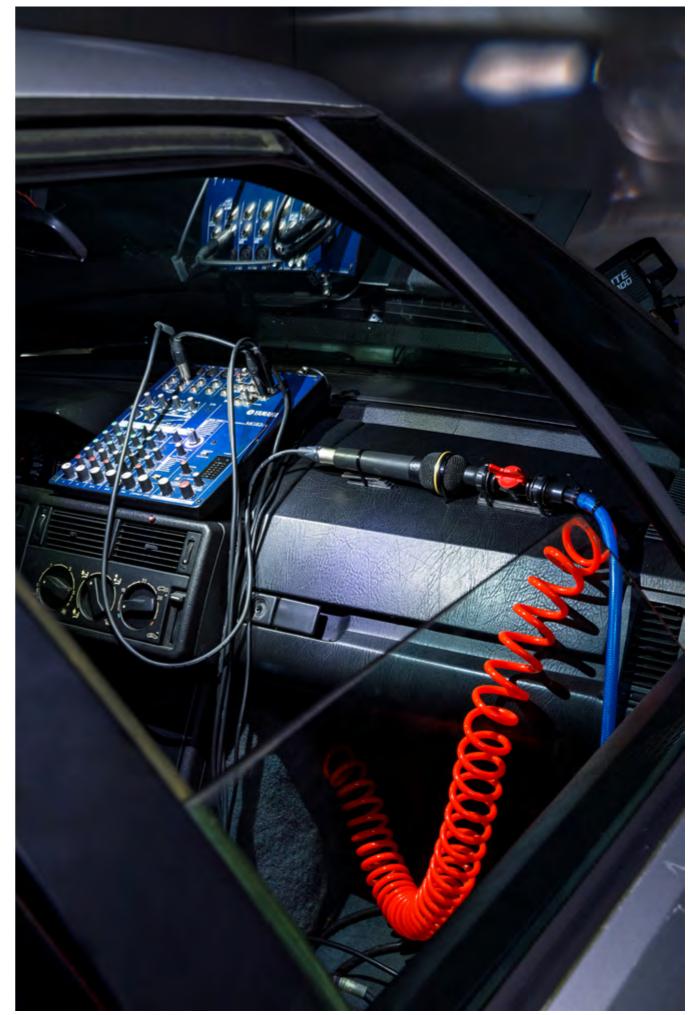


Fossile murmure, détail, 2024, Mac-val.

Stranded in the exhibition space, a sedan with sharp, aerodynamic lines is perched on jack stands. One of the front drive wheels is turned by an electric motor, artificially resurrecting the mechanical motion. As if on life support, the car emits a sound caught between a death rattle and an erotic sigh: these are the sighs of its pistons, captured by microphones placed at the exhaust valve, deep within the engine.

No combustion, therefore, propels this speed machine. The captured and re-amplified rattle whispers the lubricious swan song of an eroto-fossil society at the end of the road. A camera obscura, fashioned here from a dragster's radiator, projects the metallic landscape of this final voyage onto the wall.

FOSSILE MURMURE 2024



Fossile murmure, détail, 2024, Mac-val.



Laser Cart (street vendor cart, diy laser-cutter, hydrolic press, motorcycle helmets)

Exhibition view, Shenshya Gallery, Wuhan (China), 2019

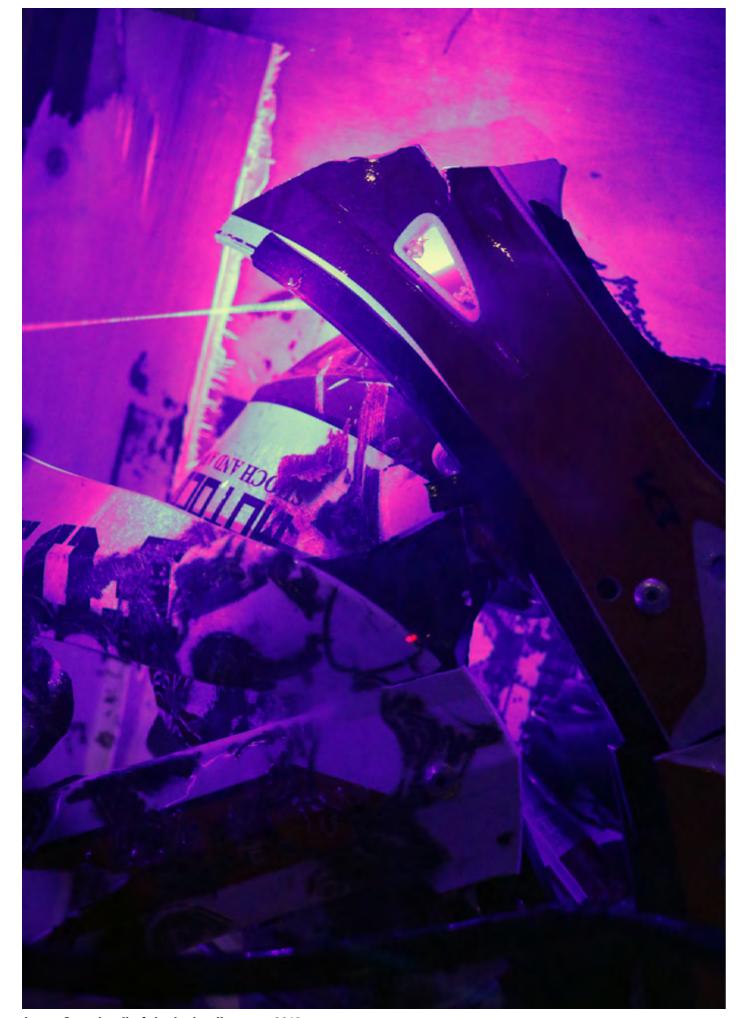


Laser Cart, detail, 2019

LASER CART 2019

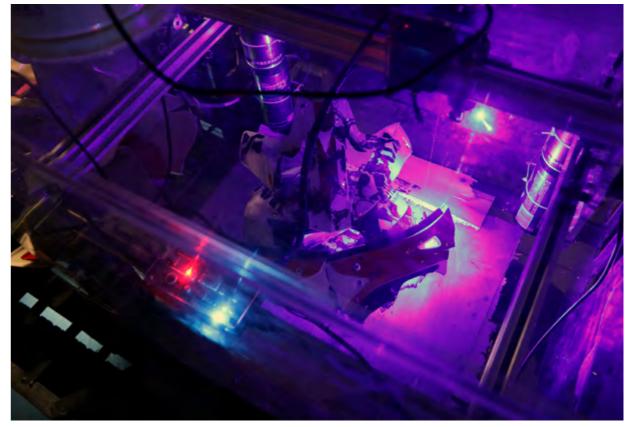


Laser Cart, detail, 2019



Laser Cart, detail of the hydraulic press, 2019

LASER CART 2019

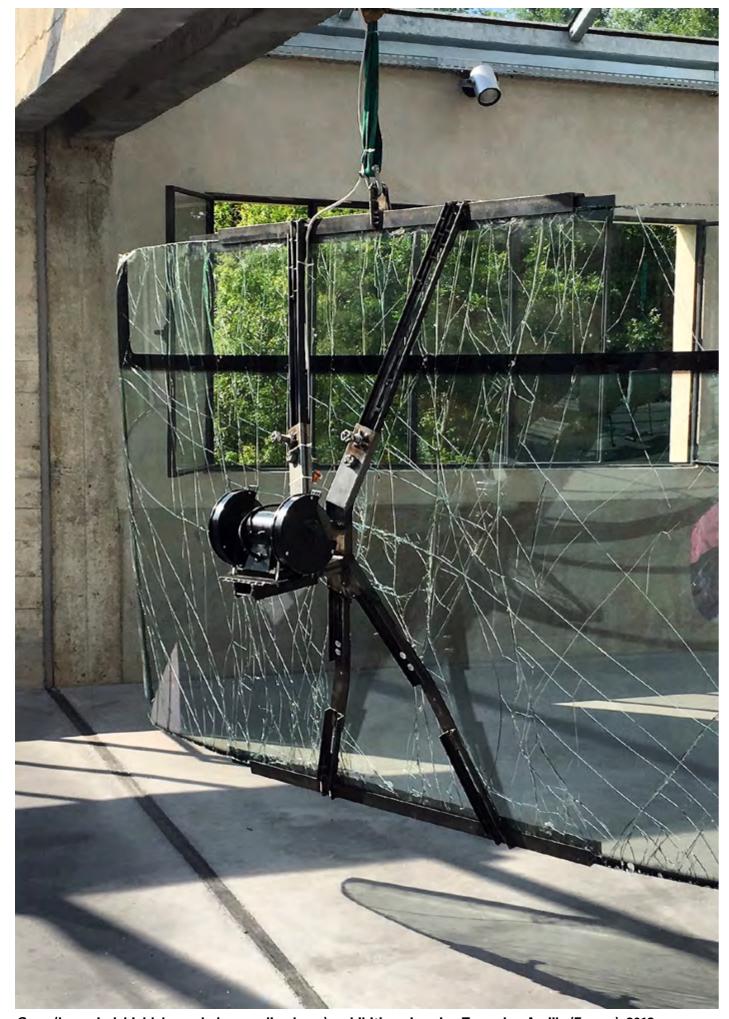


Laser Cart, detail of the hydraulic press, 2019

A walking trolley deploys a miniature production line. Motocross helmets flattened by a hydraulic press pass under a laser cutter made of recovered components. The machine chars the plastic by drawing traditional ornamental patterns. The helmets are turned into masks. They are installed on displays halfway between traditional relics and a shoe store.

Curated by Wu Zenhua

PRESS ≯II FOR VIDEO GONG

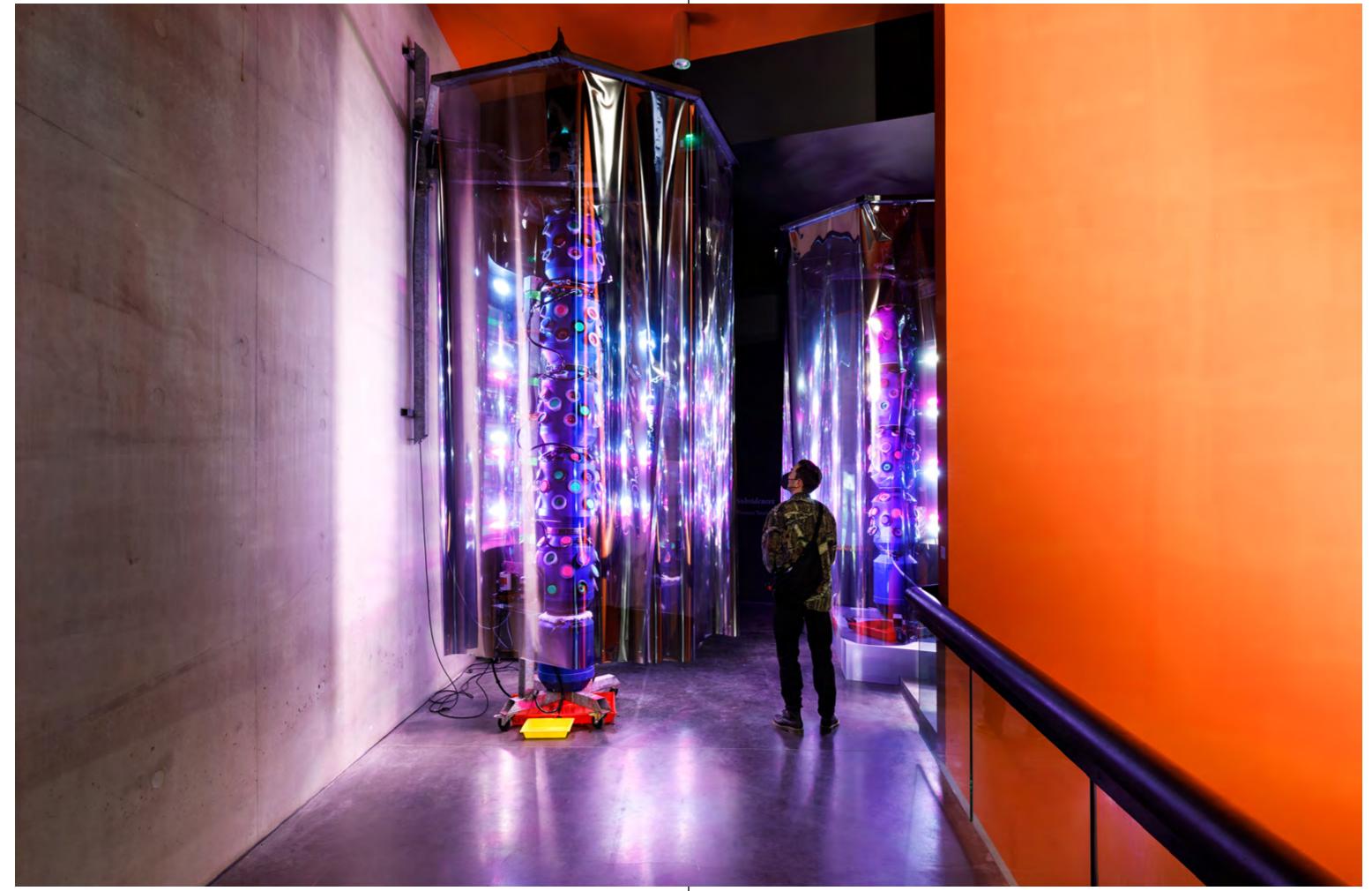


Gong (bus windshield, bass shaker, media player), exhibition view, Les Tanneries, Amilly (France), 2018

GONG 2018

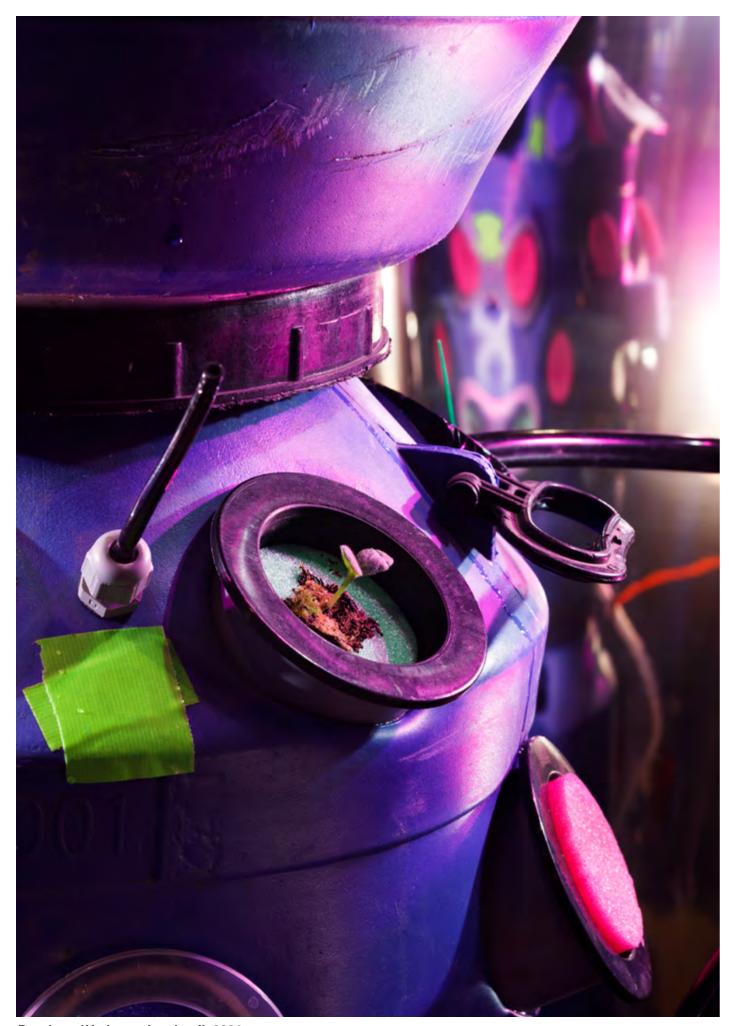
A crashed bus windshield hangs from the ceiling. Intermittently, a bass shaker activates causing it to vibrate and turn on itself. Resurgence of the initial shock, the cracks gradually enlarge and the shock wave spreads to the surrounding walls and bodies. Like a Tibetan laminated glass bowl, the gong reflects a liquid image of the surrounding space.

Curated by Stéphanie Cherpin and Laurent Faulon



Bootlegg/Hydroponics (LED full spectrum lights, 15 gallon plastic barells, water sprinklers, nutrient solution)

Exhibition view, FRAC Bretagne, Rennes (France), 2022. Photo: © Salim Santa Lucia

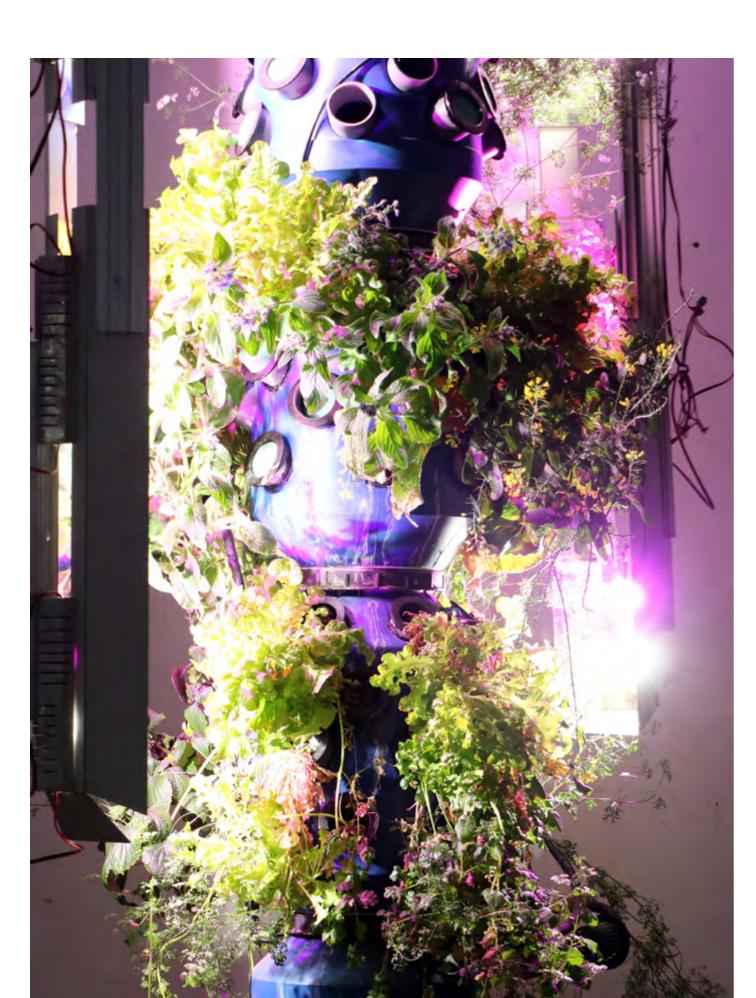


Bootlegg/Hydroponics, detail, 2021

BOOTLEGG/HYDROPONICS

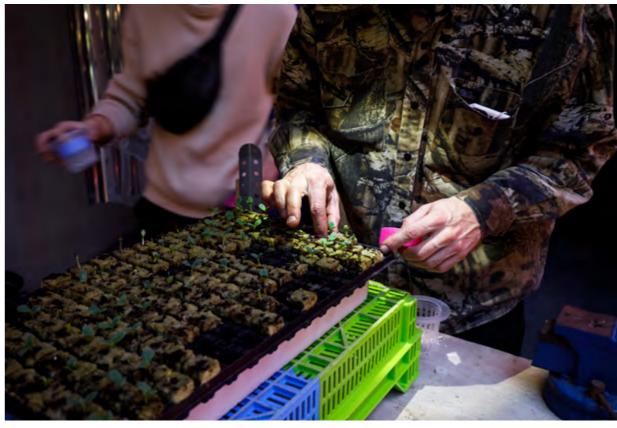


Bootlegg/Hydroponics, detail, 2021



Bootlegg/Hydroponics, detail, 2021

BOOTLEGG/HYDROPONICS



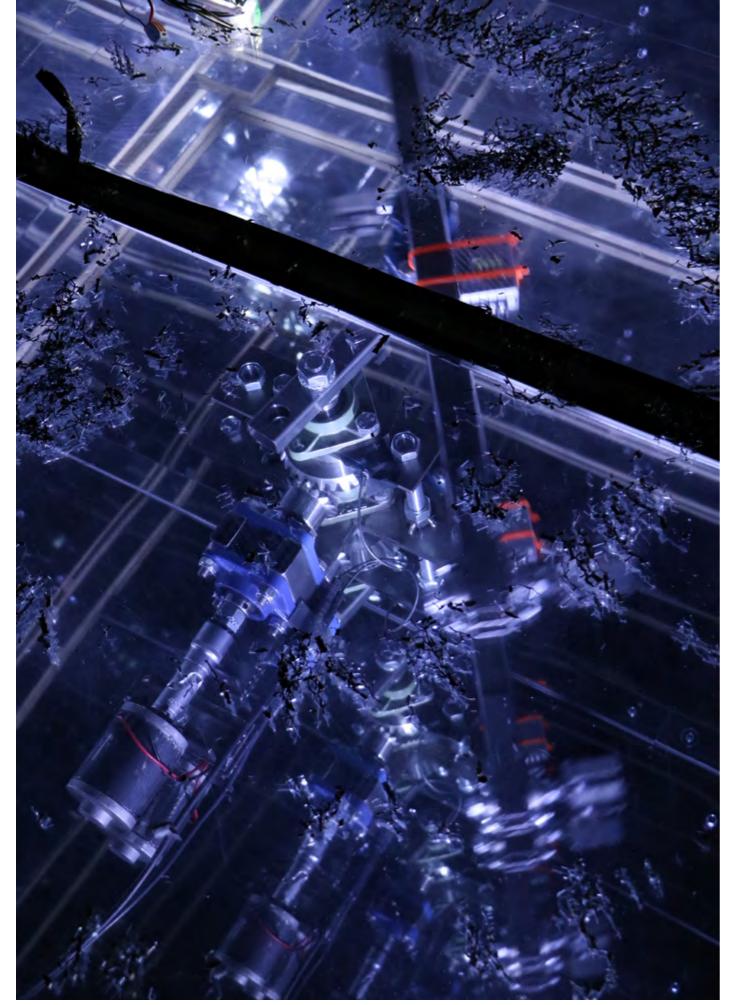
Bootlegg/Hydroponics, detail, 2021

The Bootlegg/Hydroponics project aims to concretize several years of experiments carried out between France, Senegal, and the United States around different hybridized soil-less cultivation techniques to produce a living and mobile archive of the pharmacopoeia of urban wastelands. Suspended biotope, modular architecture, Bootlegg/Hydroponics is at the same time a garden, a laboratory and a cathedral. A giant organ where the latest technical developments of "indoor" agronomy rub shoulders with "do it yourself" culture and where gardening becomes an extended field of sculpture.



TV Set (mechanical arm, neodymium magnets, stainless steel filings, spy mirror, contact microphone)

The time is out of joint, exibition view, Paris (France), 2021. Photo: © Salim Santa Lucia



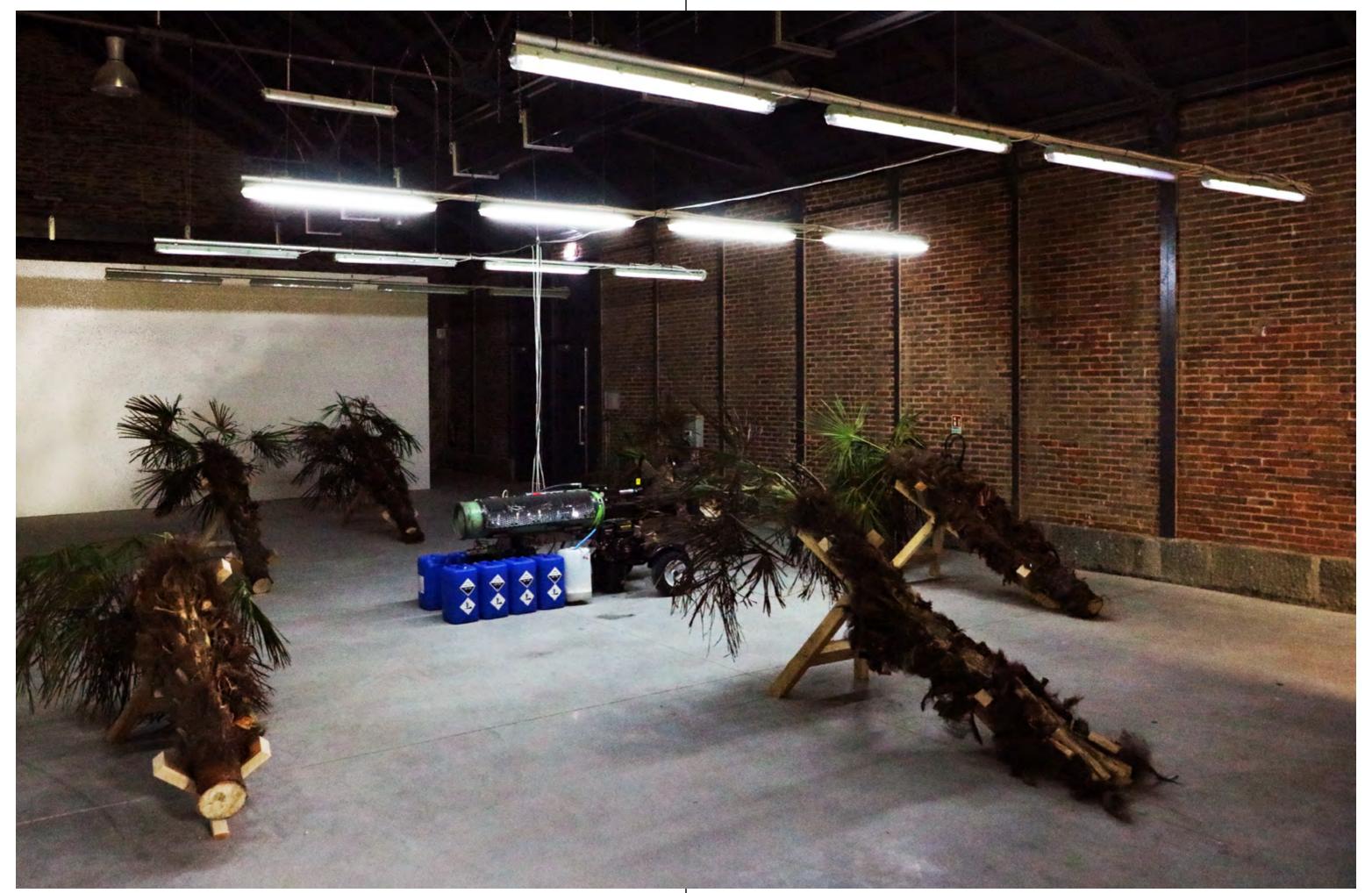
TV Set, detail, 2021

TV SET 2021

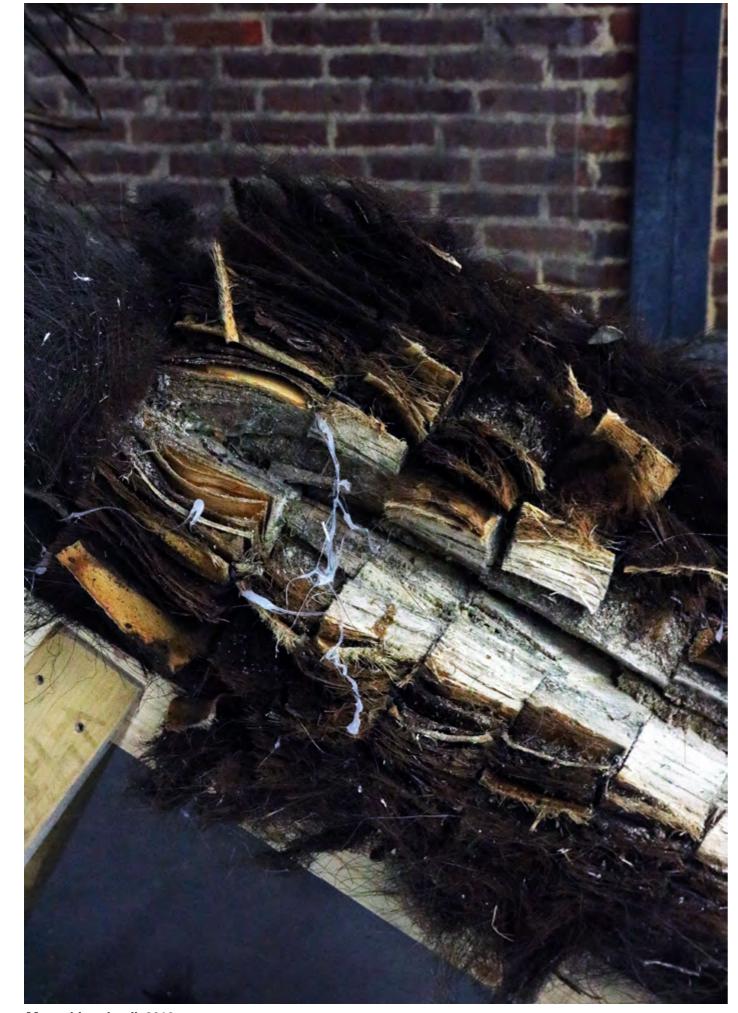
A wooden Pandora's box illuminates the dark space of the exhibition with a strobe light. Dazzling shades pass through the walls like ghostly silhouettes flashing in the cave - vestiges of an ancient camera obscura. Inside the "box", a mobile and mechatronic arm is reflected and multiplied by an endless mirror. On its surface, iron filings are agitated by magnetism like the hair of a purring cat or some shadow cocaine dancing on the epileptic gearing's sound.

Curated by Simona Dvorakova



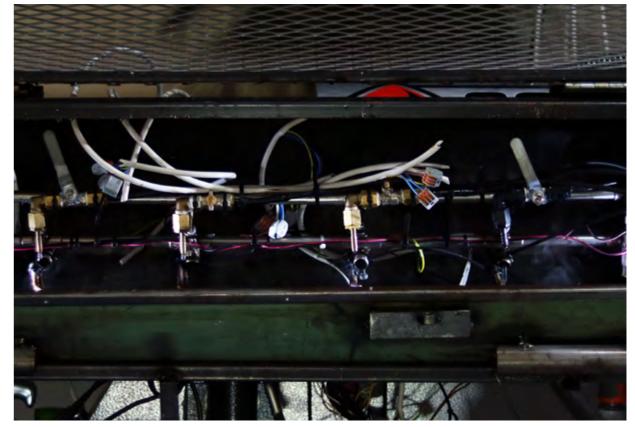


Exhibition view, Incorporated! 5th Rennes biennale, Rennes (France), 2016



Moonshine, detail, 2016

MOONSHINE 2016



Moonshine, detail, 2016

Palm trees are crushed in order to extract the sap.
Once fermented, the viscous liquid flows over the bare electrical wires of the space lights, making them shatter until the liquid evaporates. A contact microphone amplify the sound of the electric signal.

Curated by Francois Piron

Born in 1988, lives and works in Paris
Co-founder at Le Wonder
+33(0)782368487 / tteurlai@gmail.com

EDUCATION

www.thomasteurlai.net

2013-14	ENSBA Post-Graduate Art program, Lyon – FR	www.lewonder.coi
2009-11	VILLA ARSON DNSEP (Master) with honors, Nice – FR	
2006-07	FIU International Exchange Program, Miami – USA	
2005-09		
2001-05		
2001-05	INSTITUT SAINT-LOC DE TOUNIAT DIAWING SECTION - DE	
	AWARDS	
2020	Finalist AUDI Talent	
2017		
	IAC – Biennale de Lyon Young Creation Award	
2015	Nominated Prix Fondation d'entreprise Pernod Ricard	
	City of Marseille Award	
2014	Prix Slick-Arte and Beaux Arts Magazine	
2011	City of Nice – Young Creation Award	
	SELECTED SOLO/DUO SHOWS	
0000	BERCOR 200 Ital Oniona ED	
2026	MAGCP 220 volts, Cajarc-FR	
2025	FRAC PAYS DE LA LOIRE Sarcophagos, Nantes-FR	
2024	LE SHED Une autre fin du monde est possible, Rouen, FR	
	MUSÉE ROBERT TATIN Après la pluie, Laval - FR	
2023	LA STATION Fossile murmure, Nice - FR	
	MAMBO Evidenza nel reatto, Bologna - IT	
	CENTRE POMPIDOU METZ <i>Transchrones</i> with Alain Damasio,	Metz - FR
2022	FRAC BRETAGNE Subsidences, Rennes – FR	
	LE CYCLOP Râle 21, Milly-la-fôret - FR	
2021	CAPC Transchrones with Alain Damasio, Bordeaux – FR	
2020	WONDER/ZENITH Plexus Solaire with Roy Könhke, Nanterre - F	R
	CENTRE D'ART BASTILLE Dancing Ghosts, Grenoble – FR	
2019	FISH FACTORY Chopper Desk, Reykjavik – IS	
	PICTO Klaus Nomi auf LSD, Geneva – CH	
2018	NATHAN KOESTLIN GALLERY Ex-voto, Berlin – DE	
2017	A RUN SPACE Obscura Camera, Milwaukee – US	
2016	MUSÉE CANTINI Bullroarer, Marseille – FR	
	COPYCAT BUILDING Footlocker / Cur: Joseph Shaikevitz, Baltimo	ore – US
2015	PIPE FACTORY Snug as a thug in a rug, Glasgow – GB	
	LOEVENBRUCK GALLERY Lowrider, Paris – FR	
2014	PALAIS DE TOKYO L'État du Ciel / Cur: Daria de Beauvais, Paris	_ FR
	FONDAZIONE SANDRETTO RE REBAUDENGO Europium, Tori	
	Total Caropiani, ion	
	SELECTED GROUP SHOWS	
2024	MAC VAL Humain autonome, lvry - FR	
2023	FONDAZIONE SANDRETTO RE REBAUDENGO 10 years-Torin	o- IT
2022	VILLA ARSON Ce que nous avons perdu dans le feu , Nice- FR	
2021	BEAUX-ARTS DE PARIS Time is out of joint / Cur: Simona Dvo	rakova, Paris – FR
	LE CRÉDAC La vie des tables / Cur: Claire le Restif, lvry – FR	
2020	PROVIDENZA LAB Providenza 2120, Pieve – CO	
2019	LES TANNERIES The Midnight Sun / Cur: Stéphanie Cherpin, Ar	nilly – FR
_0.0	BERTRAND GRIMONT GALLERY Si par parking vous entendez	•
2018	WONDER/LIEBERT Opéra d'Hiver, Bagnolet – FR	. jaram, rans Tri
2010	MUSEO WILFREDO LAM Rendez-vous, La Havana – CU	
	SHENSHYA GALLERY We're here, Wuhan – CN	D
2047	LA PANACÉE Crash Test / Cur: Nicolas Bourriaud, Montpelier - F	
2017	DUSABLE MUSEUM Singing Stones / Cur: Katell Jeffres, Chicag	Jo - US
	FRICHE BELLE DE MAI Viandes Foraines, Marseille – FR	
	PALAIS DE TOKYO Le Toguna / Cur: Jean de Loisy, Paris – FR	
	DOCUMENTA 14 Prec(ar)ious Collectives, Athens – GR	
	WONDER/LIEBERT <i>Dirty Pepax</i> , Paris – FR	
2016	NUIT BLANCHE cur: Jean de Loisy, Paris – FR	

FONDATION RICARD L'ordre des Lucioles / Cur: Marc-Olivier Walher, Paris – FR

THOMAS TEURLAI TTEURLAI@GMAIL.COM

+33(0)782368487

