

Carlos Capelán

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The Illegible Proclamation On the work of Capelán

For a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live.
Adorno.

Introduction. Two scenes.

Generally speaking, critical approximations to Capelán's work take the figure of exile as their starting point. Such an approach is legitimate; undoubtedly Capelán's displacement – he abandoned Uruguay to flee dictatorial repression – forcefully marks his artistic itinerary. This essay will also take up the figure of exile but that of language rather than politics (although political exile is also implicated): the radical displacements induced by the failures of representation. Perhaps the evictions and displacements suffered by Capelán have sensitized him to the estrangement of the gaze. If so they have facilitated access to the playfulness of art which strives to mend the ruin of place from afar: those strange games capable of forcing open parallel spaces where language resounds either as image or as writing (traced on

the limit, suspended over silence). Spectral images from which to glimpse the skittish paths of meaning.

I therefore approach Capelán's work insofar as it is caught up within the contemporary failure of representation: the catastrophe that forces language into violent contortions and extreme situations. Faced with the insufficiency of the symbolic the only option is to assume radical mobilizations and desperate assaults. The failure can be located in two scenes. The first refers to the political representation of identities. The second to the representation that mobilizes the work of art. In order to facilitate exposition, my essay will consider both scenes separately, but they are inextricable insofar as they concern the politics of the gaze.



Painting, 1977
Acrylic on paper, 90 x 62 cm.
Jose Luis Fleitas, Lund, Sweden

El Angel de la Ciudad, 1980
Etching, 13,5 x 16,5 cm.

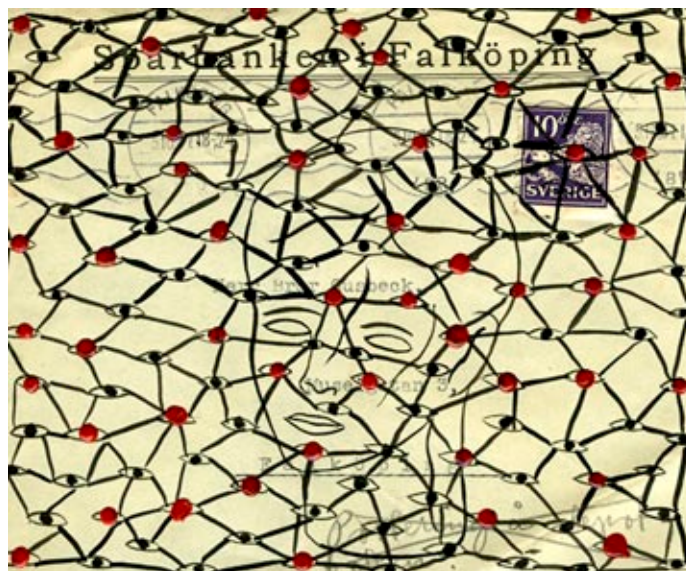
On the one hand, the shifting positions, the litigious encounter of gazes, mark the oscillating recognition of subjectivities (whence does an identity come from?). On the other hand, the missed encounter between things and their appearances (the failure of representation in art) not only twists languages, but upsets the labor of the gaze. “A work resists,” says Didi-Huberman, “if it dislocates vision.” He proposes therefore to consider, alongside form, this “fluctuating notion”: the gaze.¹ If, lacking a previous metaphysical guarantee, the work of art finds itself subject to the contingencies of its mise-en-scene, then it ends up depending on its positions and displacements before the gaze. Its auratic investment obeys a “minimum distance” (Benjamin): an always fortuitous distance marked by the provisional position

of the object and freed to the vicissitudes of desire (which is responsible for the fluctuation of the gaze).

But the scenes in which representation fails are also linked because both share a political status and imply an aesthetic dimension. “For representation to convey the human, then, representation must not only fail, but it must show its failure”². Against the immobilization or melancholy produced by the loss of faith in the symbol all that is left is the representation of representation: a painful contortion of language through which it offers up its wants to the gaze, searching thus to dress up its lack with images. This complicated operation is the peculiar calling of art.

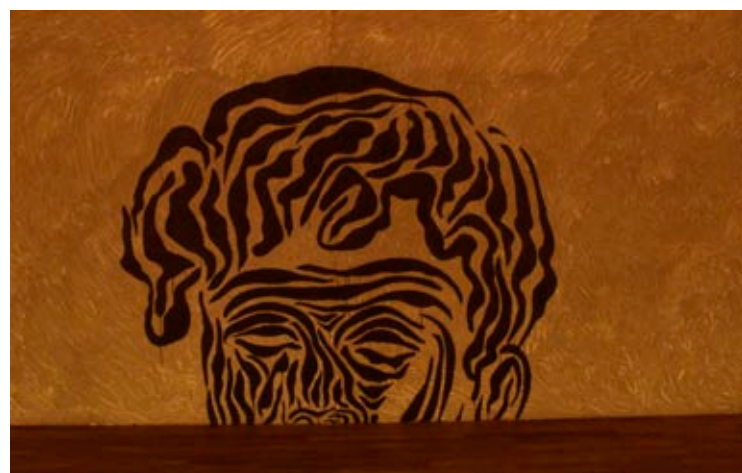
¹ Georges Didi-Huberman, “La emoción no dice yo. Diez fragmentos sobre la libertad estética”, in Adriana Valdés, edit., *Alfredo Jaar. La política de las Imágenes*, Metales Pesados, Santiago de Chile, 2008, p. 41.

² Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London; New York: Verso, 2004, p. 144.



From the series: Letters, 1986
Indian ink and sealing wax on envelope, 9 x 15 cm.

Installation (fragment), 1993
Soil and Indian ink on wall
Kulturhuset, Stockholm, Sweden





Self-portrait in Stockholm, 1984
Indian ink on paper, 190 x 150 cm.

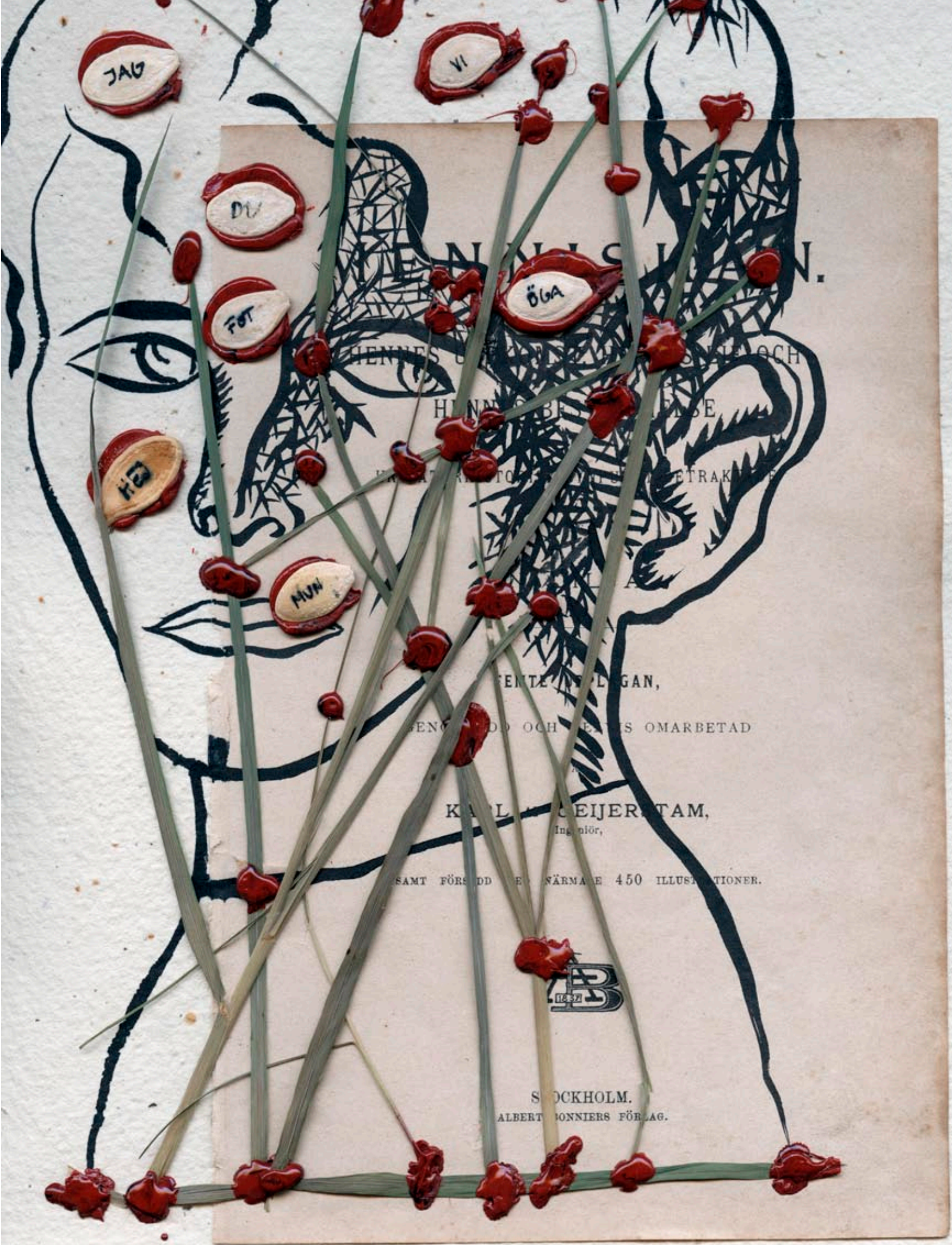


Composition 1992 | Composition 1992



Self-portrait (fragment) 1985
Indian ink, sealing wax, seeds and book page on paper,
50 x 35 cm. Collection of the artist.

Indian ink, sealing wax, seeds and book page on paper, 50 x 35 cm. Collection of the artist.



I. The Scene of Identity

The last decades of the twentieth century witnessed the return of the figure of identity to the agenda of the debates of cultural criticism after a long period of exclusion. But its concept had changed in fundamental ways. The so called “identitarian turn” began to use the term not to name a substance but a contingent historical construction. Thus, the term comes closer to designating a historical process (and therefore, a variable one) of identification rather than a fixed identity, predetermined by essential notes. To a greater or lesser extent, identities correspond to a variety of processes of the formation of subjectivities and to strategic positions. They are not exhausted, therefore, in exclusive configurations: individuals and social actors can assume multiple, discardable identitarian formats according to the various ways they slice up their positions of enunciation. That is, their presentation is their self-representation.

At this point representation and the gaze return, because subjects “represent themselves” only to an extent. On the one hand, the Cartesian subject (in possession of its own enunciation) has collapsed. On the other hand, traditional systems of representation based on great fixed unities (the Nation, territory, class, political parties etc.) have fallen away; in their place there have emerged matrices for identification, constituted both by globalization (cultural industries, on line communities) as well as new models of subjective inscription (determined, for example, by personal affinities, gender, sexual preference of aesthetic, ethnic or generational differences)³.

The classic mechanisms of representation of the self-same and the other are thus disturbed. And this has consequences for the difference of so called “Latin American art”. Enunciated from the center, art produced in the peripheries occupies the predetermined place of the other, that is,

the other face of the exemplary identity exhibited by the Western I. This scheme is based on an absolute disjunction: center and periphery occupy the extreme terms of a binary opposition which turns the other into the subaltern inversion and reflection of the self and does not admit of third options. According to this diagram, Latin American art, which seeks to affirm its difference, faces the following dilemma: either it understands its works as pure opposition to those produced by the mainstream (a gesture which signifies the negation of these and which reiterates the asymmetry negatively), or else it over-represents the markers of its own identity in an exoticizing register.

The best art produced in Latin America tries to avoid these false alternatives. The work of Capelán is part of this attempt. It assumes that the conflict between center and periphery are still operative even if takes place through complex transnational relocations. But it also assumes that such opposition must be deconstructed, assumed as a contingent tension, a conflict that can be approached according to variable historical conditions. Once the terms center and periphery are disconnected from the determination of a transcendental contradiction, the difference of Latin American practices can be understood not only through the inversion of the hegemonic model, but also through diverse, pragmatic positions, dyed by particular interests and circumstances. This critical posture leaves aside all pretension of foundational authenticity and all attempt to erect the contingent features of Latin American production in consecrated archetypes of identity. And it allows Capelán to discuss the folklorization of alterity and the stereotypes of memory using strategies that appeal to the wanderings of the gaze: through “hooks,” according to his expression, which confound pre-established meanings.

³ The return to primary forms of identification (provided by the “organic community”) risks the promotion of identitarian straightjackets and endangers the collective strategies required by the public sphere (especially in Latin America). It is necessary therefore to affirm the need to articulate partial identities in projects geared towards consolidating the public sphere. The conjunction between figures of identity and citizenship has considerably opened up the space of the political.

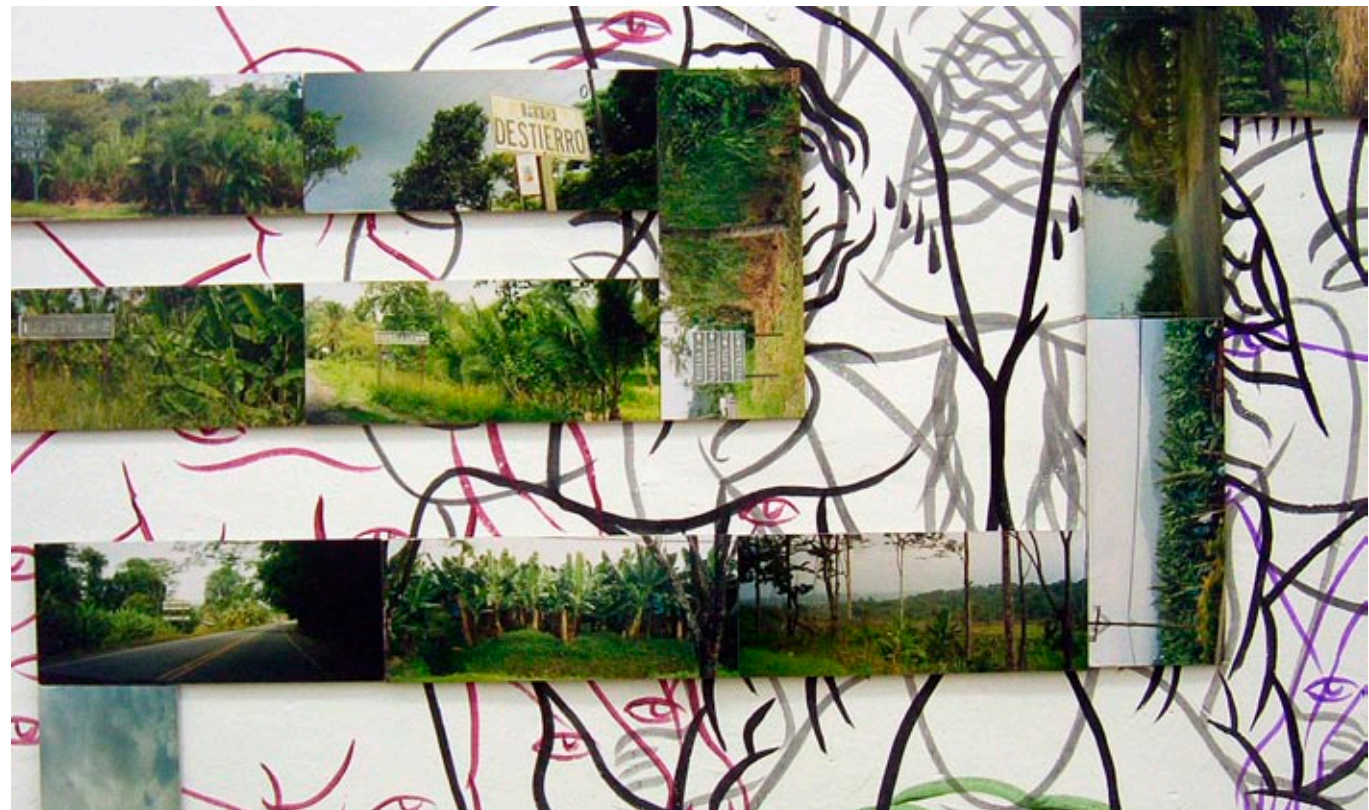
The places of exile

“I seek to avoid holing myself up in the figure of the exile because I am enamored of language”, affirms the artist⁴. The loss of the country of birth, the distance, the vicissitudes of the political refugee, the nomadism of one who must wander continuously, who must return and leave, because the home country has bifurcated or multiplied (and been displaced over and over again): Capelán does not take on any of these melancholy figure of privation and uprooting thematically but through the coercion exercised over language so that language can name that which lies beyond it.

The artist courts the lack opened up by exile. The artist circles it, attempting to find the signs to name it. The artist ends up turning writing into image, inventing an oblique language which faces it swiftly. How to offer an absence to the gaze? How to recover an impossible place, return to a place that is elsewhere, remember a country that, scattered by many memories, has been turned into many countries or many different places? Only if one assumes the darkened detour of the word, which reaches its limits and becomes a ghost of itself, echo of its own voice, shadow of its stubborn writing.

Caribbean, (fragments), 2004

Acrylic and photographs on wall
Galería Fúcares, Almagro, Spain



⁴ Interview with Carlos Capelán on April 15, 2008 in Asunción, Paraguay. All quotes from the artist are from this interview.





Maps and Landscapes, 1992

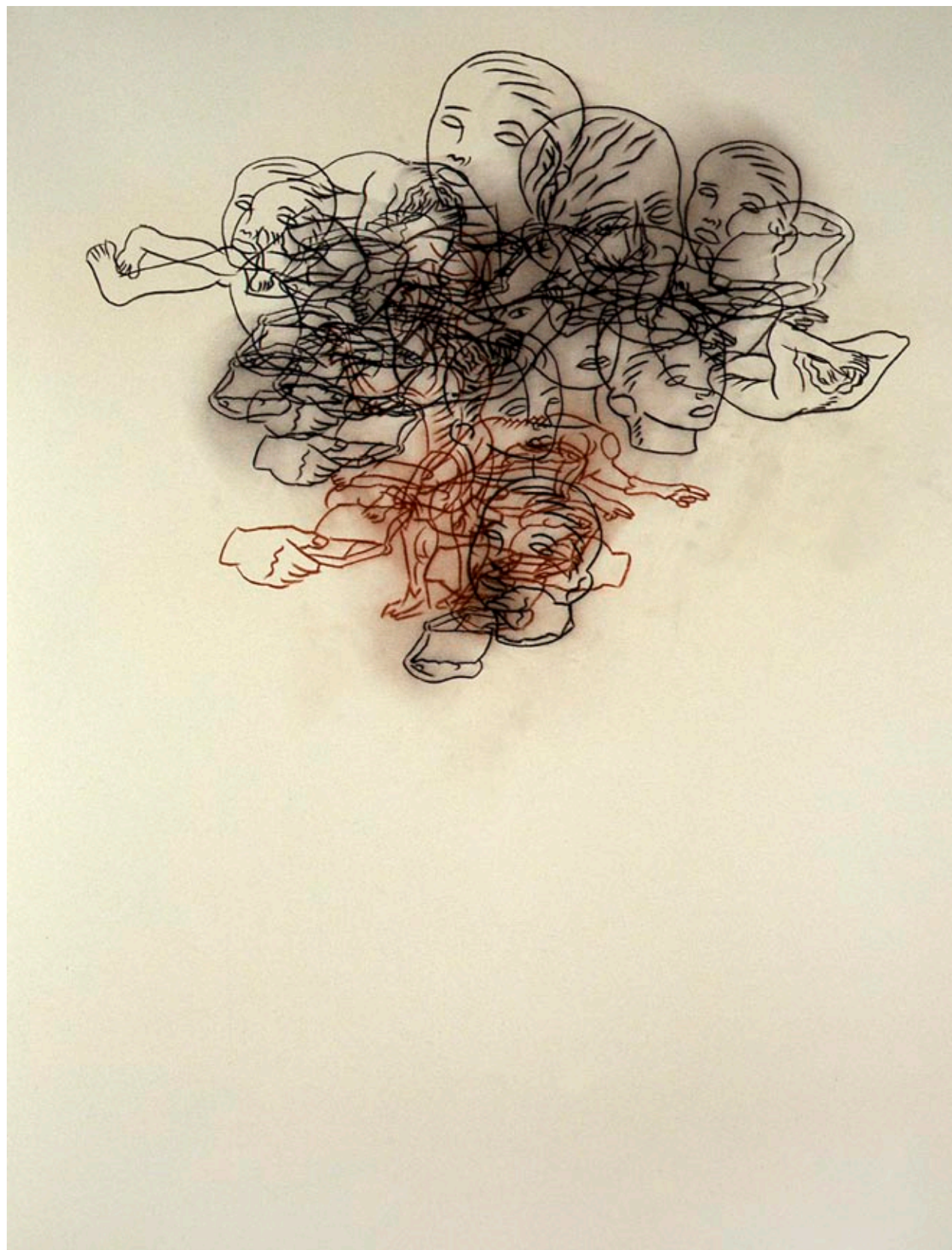
Installation; roots, wall painted with mud,
glass, clock, shelves, bottles (fragment)
Lunds Konsthall, Lund, Sweden



Sculpture 2000
Jet-lag Mambo,
Henie Onstad Museum,
Oslo, Norway

Installation, 1998
Krognoshuset,
Lund, Sweden

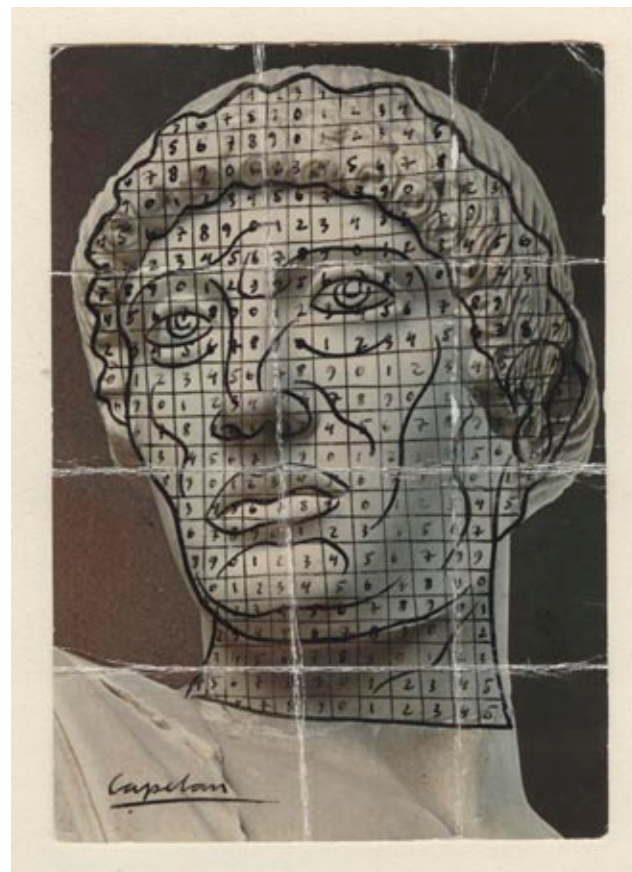
Installation 1994
Jönköpings Länsmuseum,
Jönköping, Sweden



Drawing, 1999
Charcoal and pastel on paper,
100 x 70 cm



Homage to the Native Peoples of Germany, 1999
Installation, acrylic and bronze sculpture
IFA Gallery, Berlin, Germany



Installation, 1994

Jönköpings Länsmuseum,
Jönköping, Sweden

Postcard, 1986

Ink on postcard, 16 x 10 cm
Jean Sellem Collection,
Lund, Sweden

Drawing, 1988

Fragments of drawing on
frame, in bags and on wall-
Maison Latinoamericaine,
Paris, France



Installation, 1993

Kulturhuset, Stockholm,
Sweden

Ibirapitá, onlyyou,

A Certain Notion of Place, 2005

Installation: cardboard, chair,
bandanas, bottles and a bag with water
Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales,
Montevideo, Uruguay
(Background: Map I)



Masked Portrait

The gaze deforms: only deforming the image can it find, for a second, an adequate angle. The anamorphosis of portraits requires a sideways glance in order to reconstruct, in the moment of its own subtraction, the rapid contour of that which does not have an exact contour, of that which does not have one single contour. The self-portraits of someone who is one exiled are distorted by different gazes. They are crushed, turned into shapeless stains whose key cannot be found by the direct gaze in its attempt at a literal reconstruction of the deranged figure.

But the portraits are shaken by the insistence of the defeated symbol as well as by the reiterative work of a vacillating memory: some self-portraits are superimposed on successive drawings whose lines cross, where profiles are multiplied and figures vacillate. "They are stuttering portraits", writes Capelán. They are traced with stubbornness, reiterated again and again as if the last drawing had been

swallowed up by the wall or needed to be mended. The subject of exile is multiple and emerges decentered. It lacks a surface of homogeneous smooth inscription: its angles distorted, it does not stick to any surface and ignores the strictures of the plane. It becomes a knot of tangled lines. The work of memory (the attempt to represent a displaced sameness) requires the obsessive reiteration of a silhouette which can not be completed. It summons the presentation of the face in corners, behind other works, in spaces that are crowded or badly lit. Like prehistoric cave paintings (which the artist evokes in his own occasional paintings on rocks), what is important is the fact that the image answers the summons, even if it is confused with previous images and even if light is not enough to reveal it. The magical performativity: the pure force of the invoked form. To paint a face on one own's face is also a performance: like the mask (which Lévi-Strauss likens to facial painting) it corrects one's face from an exiled self-perception.



Portrait, 1986
Photography, 22 x 16 cm
Photo Miguel Peña
Private Collection,
Lund, Sweden



Painting, 1985
Indian ink on forest and rocks,
Toscany, Italy
Photo Joseph Montague

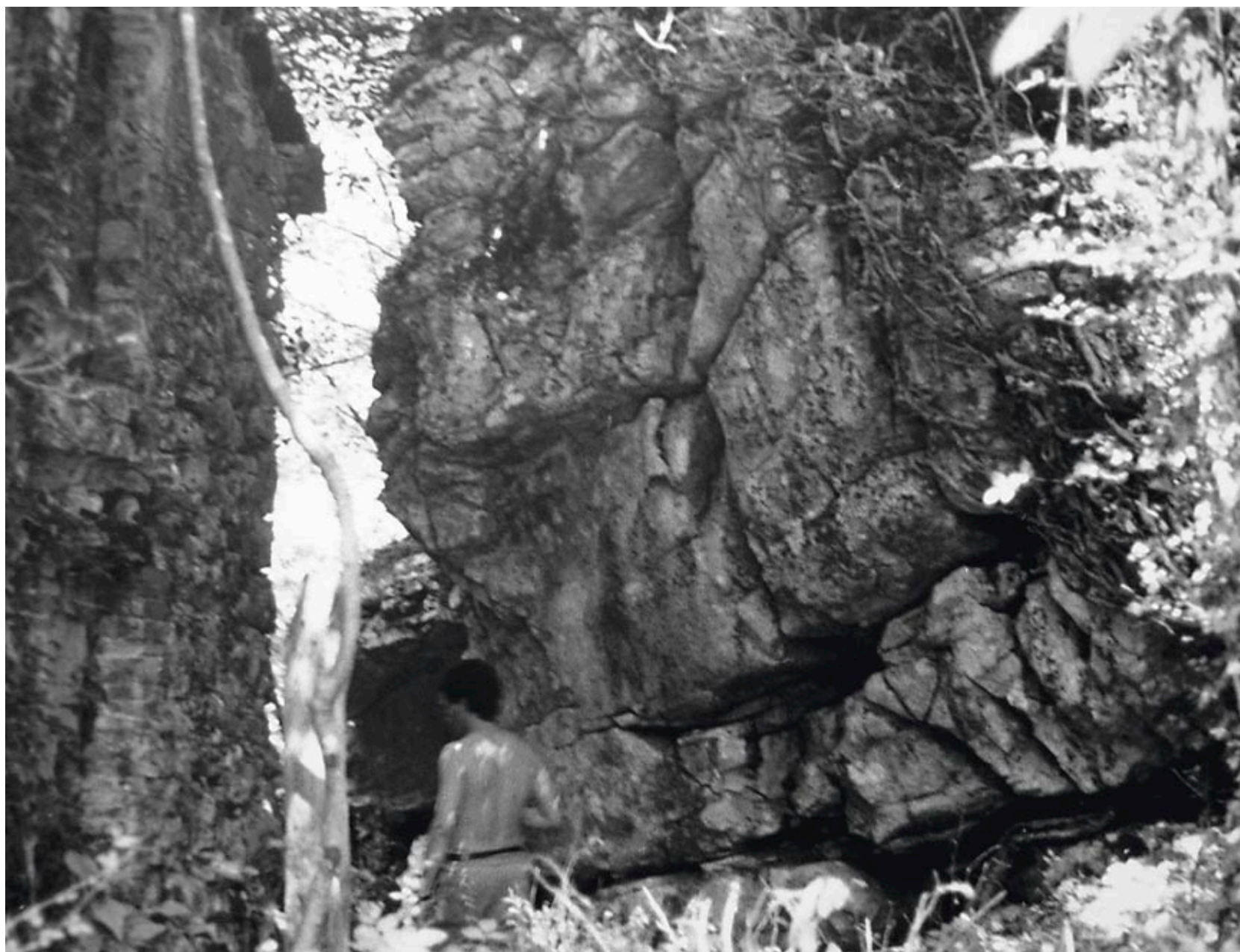




Painting, 1985
Indian ink on forest and rocks,
Toscany, Italy
Photo Joseph Montague



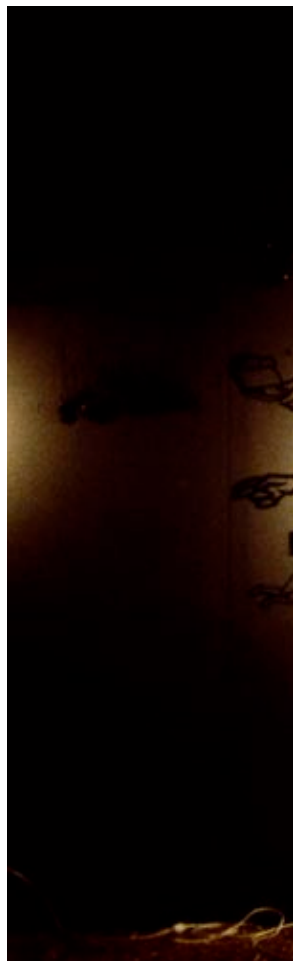
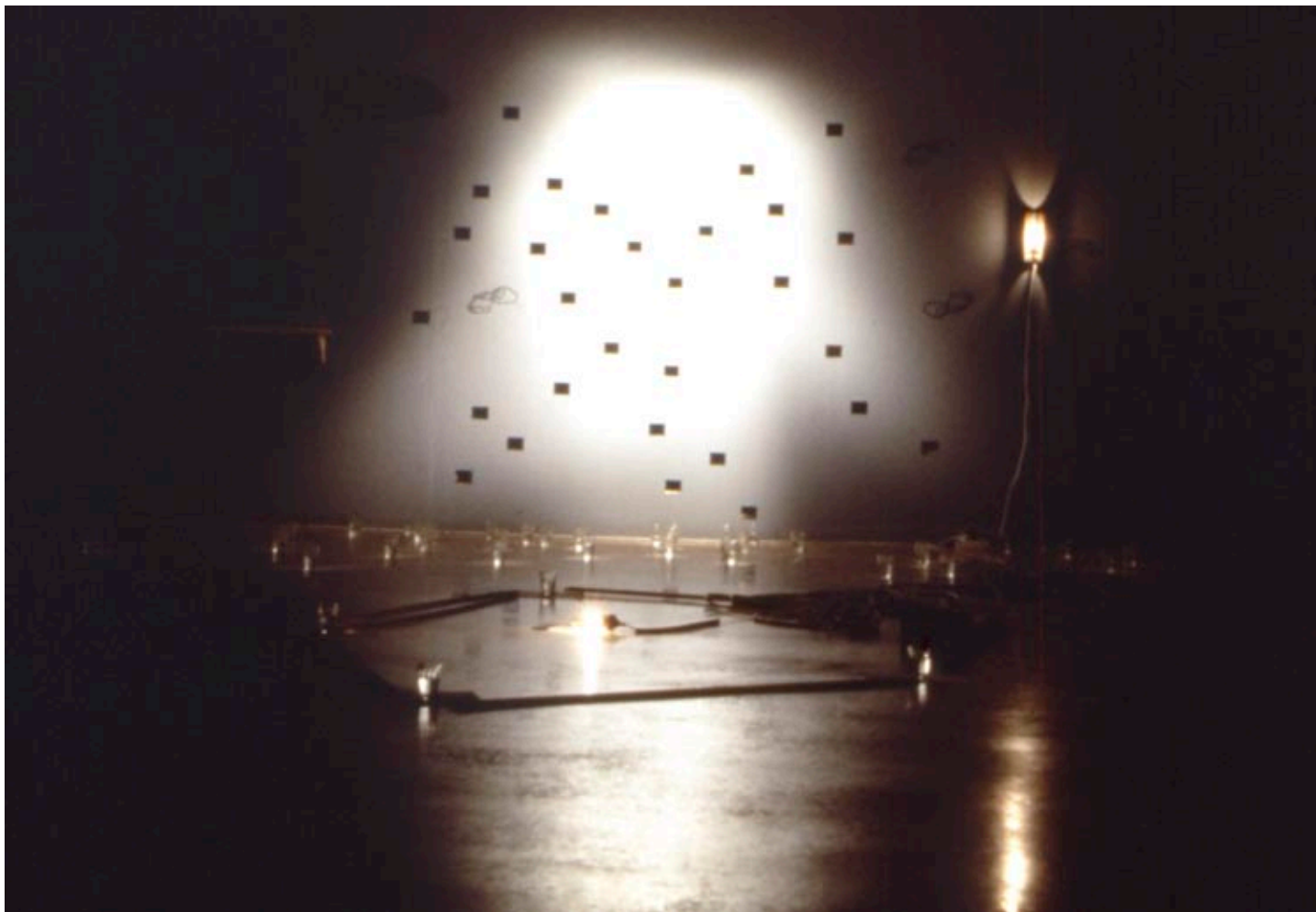


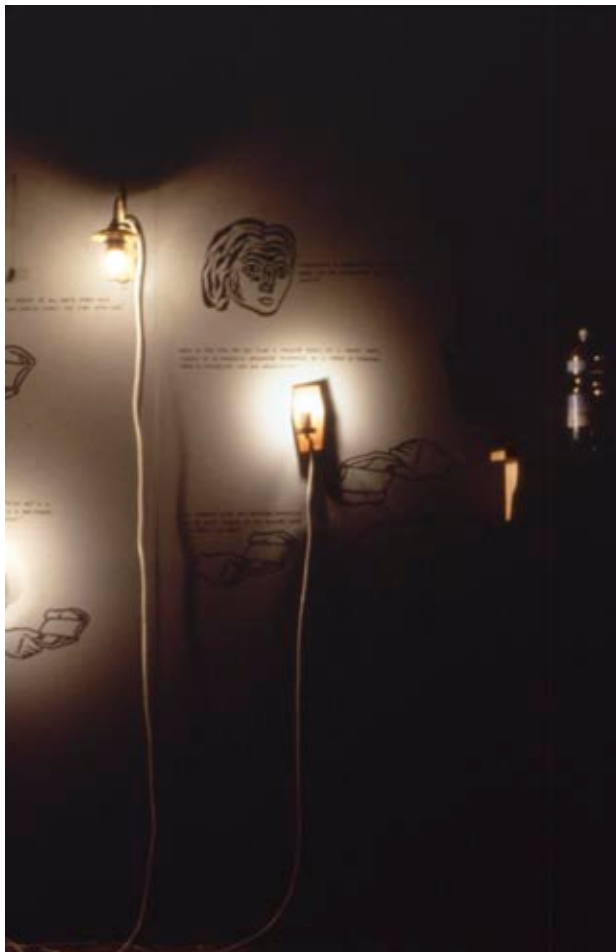


Painting, 1985
Indian ink on forest and rocks,
Toscany, Italy
Photo Joseph Montague

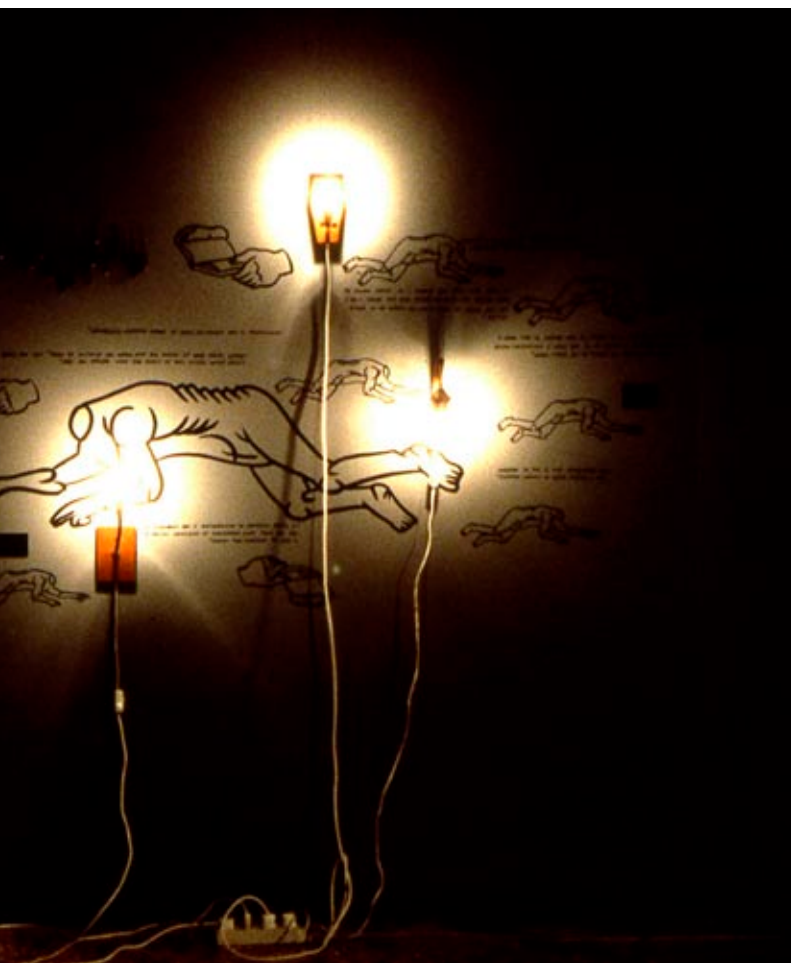
The appearance of the invisible

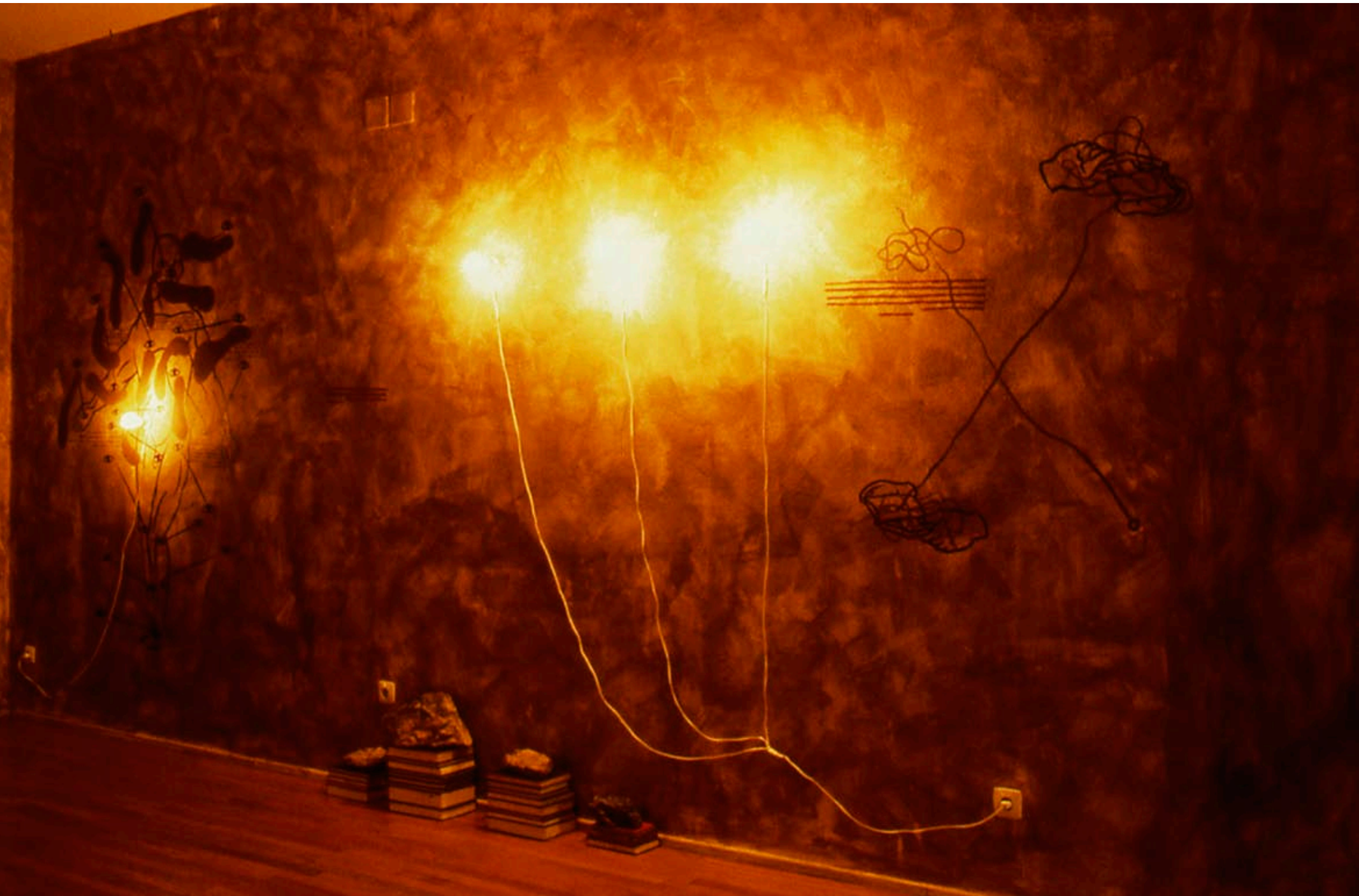
“Darkness always invite a gaze”, Capelán comments. Memory obliges one to squint, to refine the gaze, to imagine what has been erased by distance or shadows: that which can not be plainly distinguished. In some works – like those presented in the Bienal of Venice in 1995 – Capelán produces darkness to force the gaze to confront nothingness: the non-place where lost objects and transfigured lands can be found, the emptiness which territory leaves behind when it is displaced. (The murky region where that which cannot be shown – but which demands to be shown – awaits).





Installation, 1995
 Indian ink, mirrors, lamps,
 sticks and glasses of water
 La Zitelle, Venice, Italy

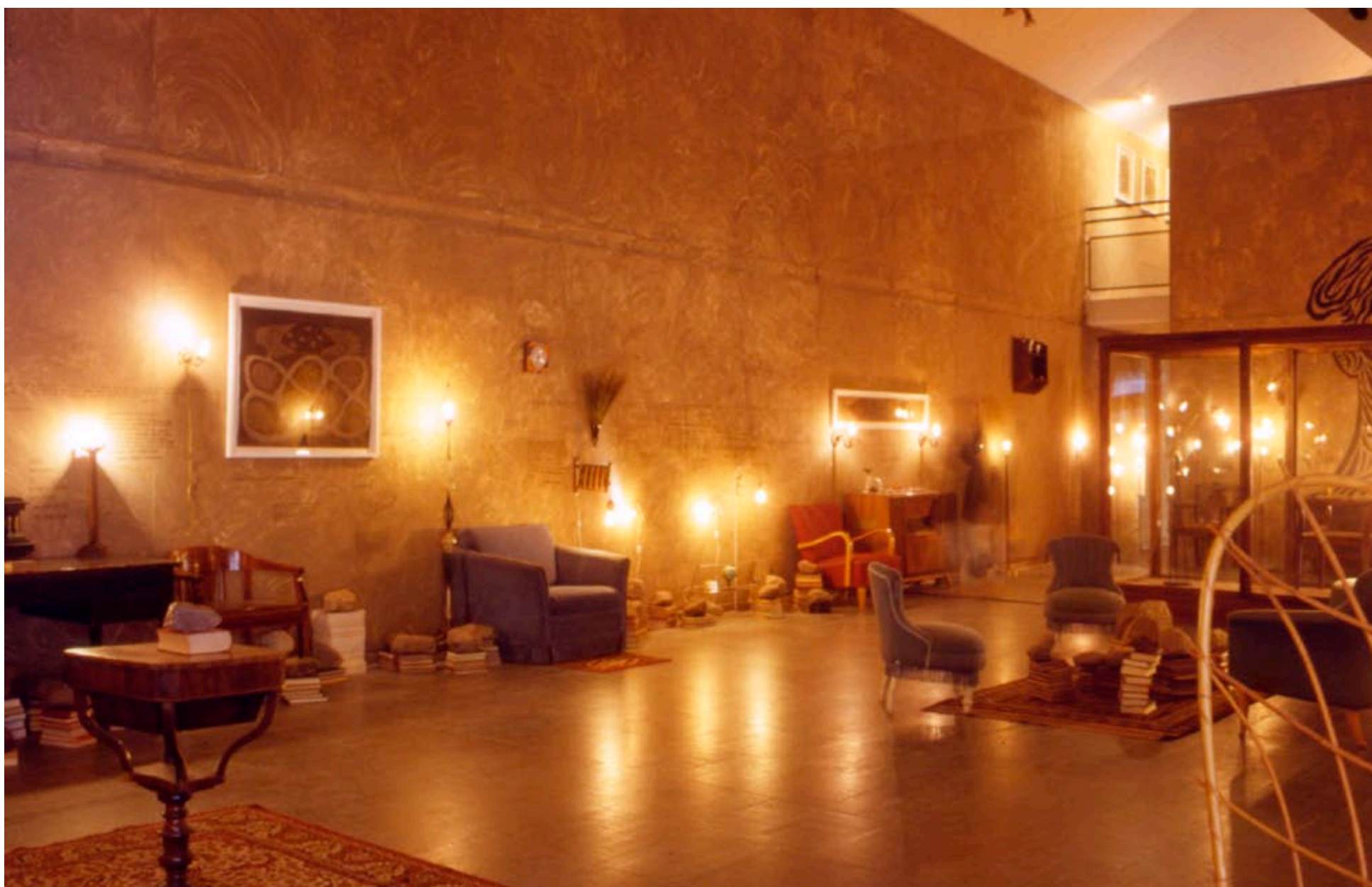




Installation, 1994

Walls painted with mud, lamps, books and
stones, Indian ink and red ocher on walls
Galería Angel Romero, Madrid, Spain





Maps and Landscapes, 1992
 Installation
 Lunds Konsthall, Lund, Sweden

Installation, 1991
 Galeri Basta, Hamburg,
 Germany

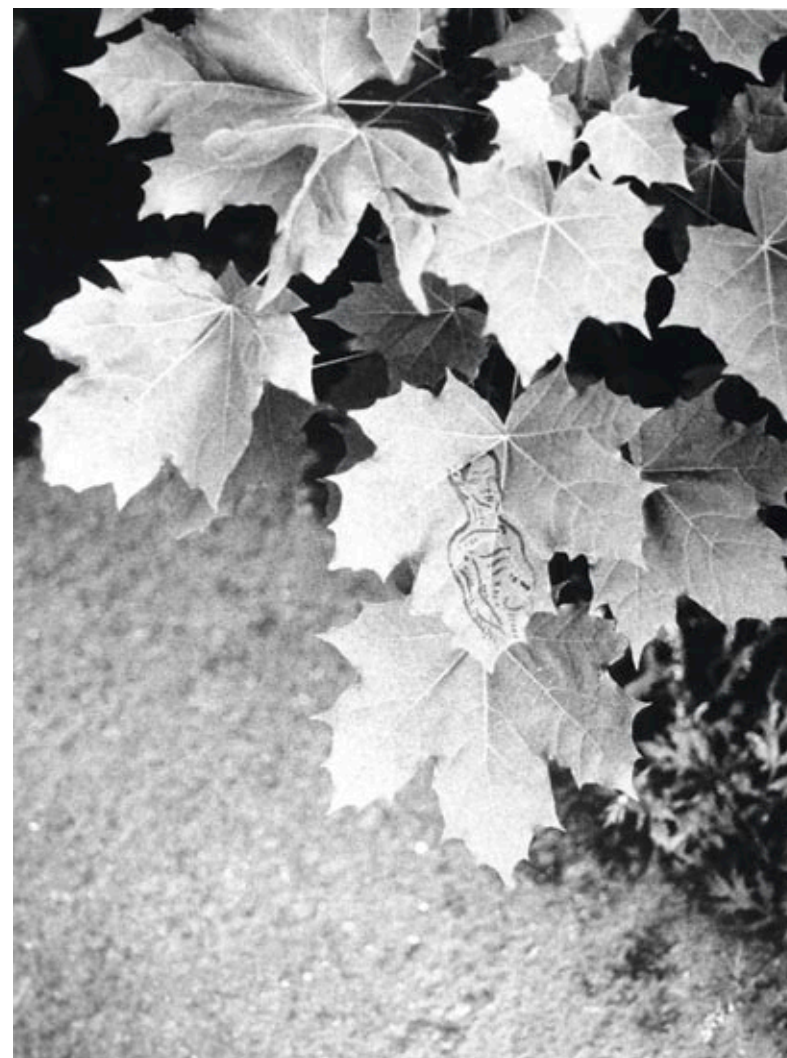


House Taken Over

The artist's invasion of abandoned houses, undertaken between 1985 and 1987, can certainly be seen as critical, ironic reflections on the institutionality of art. But they can also be considered attempts to compensate imaginarily for the mythic lost place. A ritual of mourning for the uselessness of return, the impossibility of origin.

The rite can also be traced in the montage of chaotic domestic spaces, installed compulsively and with great attention to detail in successive occasions. Freud distinguished between simple remembrance (*Erinnerung*), which pretends to identify and restore, intact, the primordial scene, and “working

through” (*Durcharbeitung*), which disorders the sequence of time and leaves the question of meaning (the suspense of happening) open in the past. Lyotard understands this term as an operation that does not attempt to reconstitute the original scene, but presupposes “that the past itself [. . .] gives [to the mind] the elements with which the scene will be constructed”⁵. This is the space that Capelán seeks to install: not the scene which faithfully replaces the original place, but the scene which represents the impossibility of representation. That is, the one that opens up the play of significations which can overturn the memory of the original home in order to turn it into a reservoir of meaning.



⁵ Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*. Trans Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991, p. 31.



Working Outside the White Cube (My gang is the Center), 1985–87
 Paintings, installations and performances in occupied houses and
 public spaces around town,
 Lund, Sweden
 Photos: Miguel Peña



Earth

In a suffocating installation (titled *The House of Memory* 1996), giant showcases interrupt passage. They carry small mounds of earth brought by friends from different ends of the earth (one cannot but hear the echo of Heidegger's name for earth, *Welt*, the compact, dark material which refuses to be deciphered).

This small rite is one way of naming the heterogeneous territory that is one's own and also alien. It is a way of building identity according to group affinities (a social modality

which, according to the artist, is closer to the punk concept of the urban group rather than the hippie idea of community). It also suggests a way of diagramming geography through affects and sensibilities and through the geometry of strictly visual configurations. Each pile of earth is symbolically marked: it comes from the soil of a site that is privately consecrated (it is composed of elements imbued with the work of memory). The artist constructs the ground of the scene collectively, half-way between the public and private. The artist traces a map.





House of Memory, 1994

Showcases with collections of earth samples gathered by friends and relatives
MEIAC, Badajoz, Spain

Homage to the Native Peoples of Germany, 1999

Showcases with collections of earth samples gathered by friends and relatives
IFA Gallery, Berlin, Germany

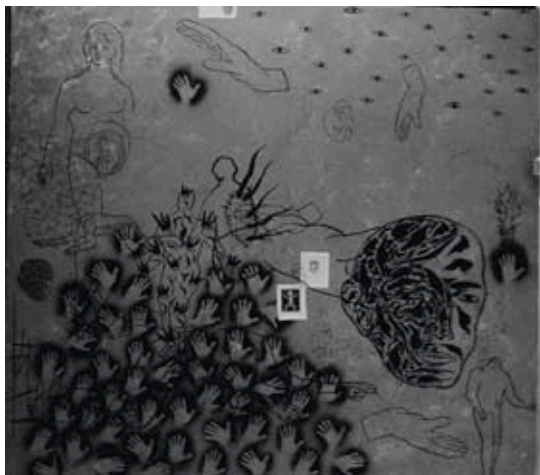


A map

Deleuze and Guattari use the term map in opposition to tracing⁶. The latter seeks to copy space faithfully; the former to reinscribe geographies in order to open them up to multiple coordinates of meaning. The tracing tries to duly reconstruct the features of the represented territory. The map seeks to admit the pressures of desire to reinvent frontiers and invert the position of the cardinal points; imagine entries and exits not registered by world maps, approximations and distances that are impossible, and the mixed soil of strange lands⁷. Capelán includes maps of his country in his installations, but he also calls his installations maps, insofar as they promote cartographies and topographic schemas: encoded writings, diagrams of random itineraries and floating positions: points which exist only as gifts to the gaze.

⁶ Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *On the Line*. Trans John Johnston. New York: Semiotext(e), 1983, 25.

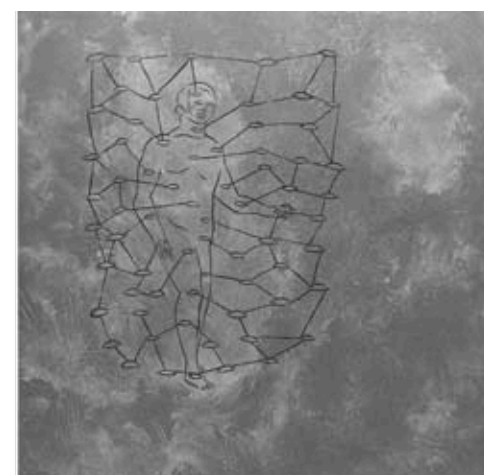
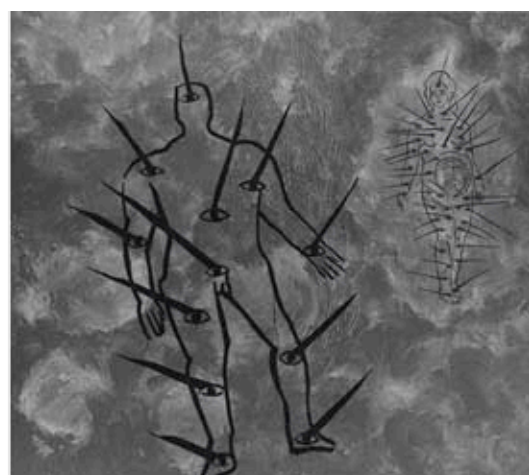
⁷ The tracing and map can be related to the previously cited figures of *rememoration y working through*.





Installation 1989

Soil, red ocher, Indian ink and book
pages on wall, 3 x 30 meters aprox
Ronneby Art Center, Ronneby, Sweden





Il primo, che si trova in un luogo di grande importanza
nella storia della civiltà, è il tempio di Amon.

Il secondo, che si trova in un luogo di grande importanza
nella storia della civiltà, è il tempio di Amon.

Il terzo, che si trova in un luogo di grande importanza
nella storia della civiltà, è il tempio di Amon.

Il quarto, che si trova in un luogo di grande importanza
nella storia della civiltà, è il tempio di Amon.

Il quinto, che si trova in un luogo di grande importanza
nella storia della civiltà, è il tempio di Amon.

Il sesto, che si trova in un luogo di grande importanza
nella storia della civiltà, è il tempio di Amon.

Il settimo, che si trova in un luogo di grande importanza
nella storia della civiltà, è il tempio di Amon.

Il ottavo, che si trova in un luogo di grande importanza
nella storia della civiltà, è il tempio di Amon.

Il nono, che si trova in un luogo di grande importanza
nella storia della civiltà, è il tempio di Amon.

Il decimo, che si trova in un luogo di grande importanza
nella storia della civiltà, è il tempio di Amon.

Il undicesimo, che si trova in un luogo di grande importanza
nella storia della civiltà, è il tempio di Amon.

Il dodicesimo, che si trova in un luogo di grande importanza
nella storia della civiltà, è il tempio di Amon.

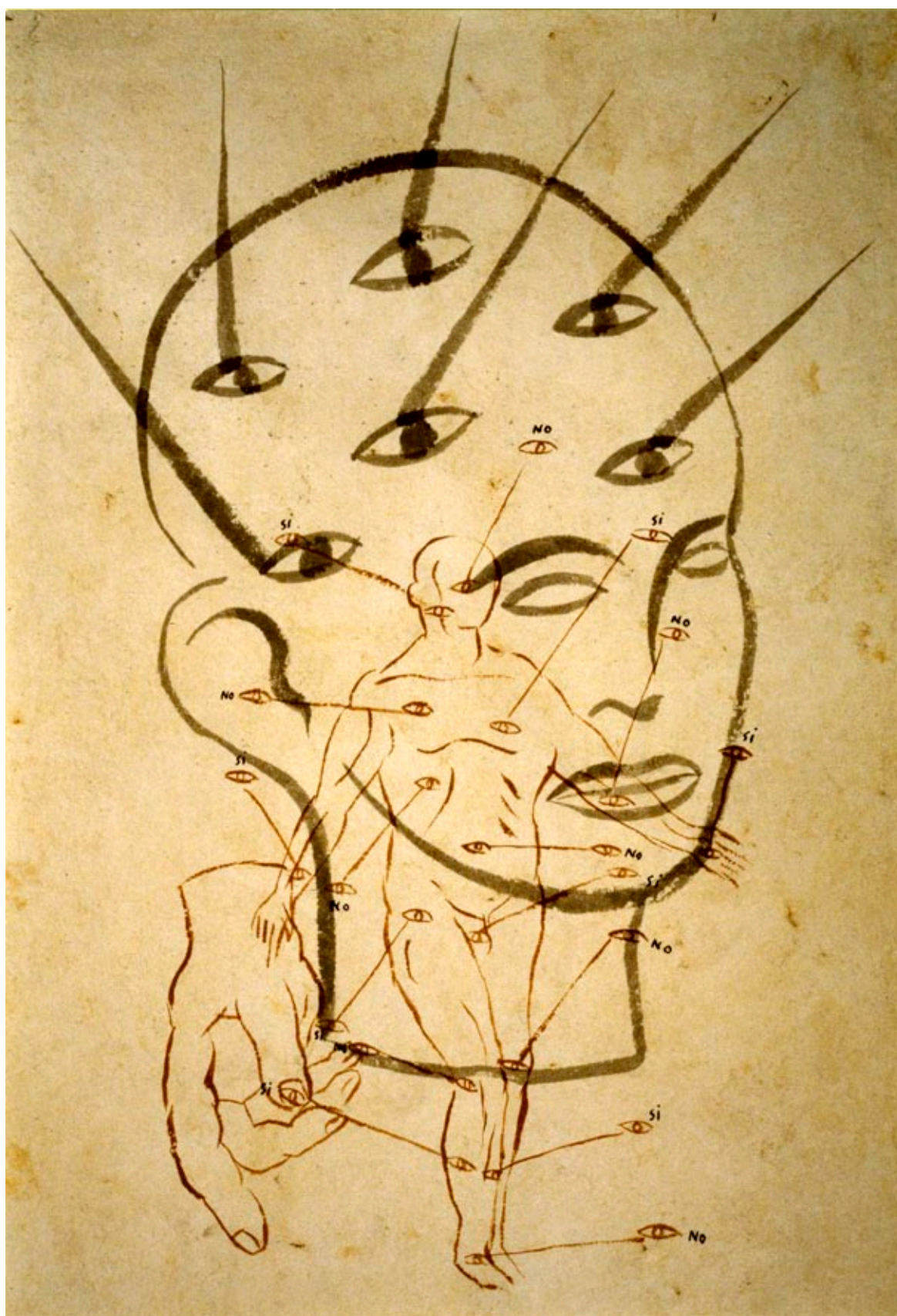


Painting, 1994

Soil, earth pigments and Indian ink on canvas, 203 x 205 cm
Private Collection, Bogotá, Colombia

Painting on paper, 1992

Soil, root and Indian ink on paper, 50 x 40 cm
Private collection, Lund, Sweden



The borrowed letter

Sometimes the friends don't send mounds of earth but sealed envelopes which are displayed, unopened, in frames or windows; they are both offered and withdrawn from the gaze. The distance which the labor of memory needs is established on blind spots. That is why the letter too close at hand evades the gaze.





From the series Letters, 1986

Indian ink on envelope, 15 x 12 cm

Homage to the Native Nations of Germany, 1999

To the left: painting on canvas

To the right: Unopened envelope containing information about the foreign companies that invested money in the reconstruction of Berlin. Sent to the gallery from Central America.
IFA Gallery, Berlin, Germany

THE DECENTERED SELF IS OUT OF HARMONY WITH A SOCIETY STILL BASED ON CENTRAL AUTHORITY."

"CHINESE TEXTS USE "AS LONG AS IT TAKES TO EAT A BOWL OF RICE"
AS A TIME UNIT; VEDIC TEXTS USE "AS LONG AS IT TAKES
TO MILK A COW!"

By air mail
Par avion

CUSTOMS/DOUANE CI

(May be opened)
(Peut être ouvert)

Detach this part if the packet is accompanied by a
Customs declaration. Otherwise it must be
completed.

See instructions on the back
Detailed Description of Contents
(Designation détaillée du contenu)

Bark

Insert 'x' if the contents are:

(Insérer 'x' si le contenu est:)

a gift (un cadeau)

a sample of merchandise

(un échantillon de marchandises)

Value (Valeur)

(Specify the currency)

£20

Net Weight

(Poids net)

400 gm

"SEEN THIS WAY, THE SELF IS NOT A PERCEIVED OBJECT,
BUT A MENTAL OBJECT, CREATED BY AN ORGANIZING
OPERATION PERFORMED ON A STREAM OF IMPRESSIONS WHICH
IN THEMSELVES LACK SUCH ORGANIZATION!"

Carlos Capelán

Nils Bjelkegatan 4 A

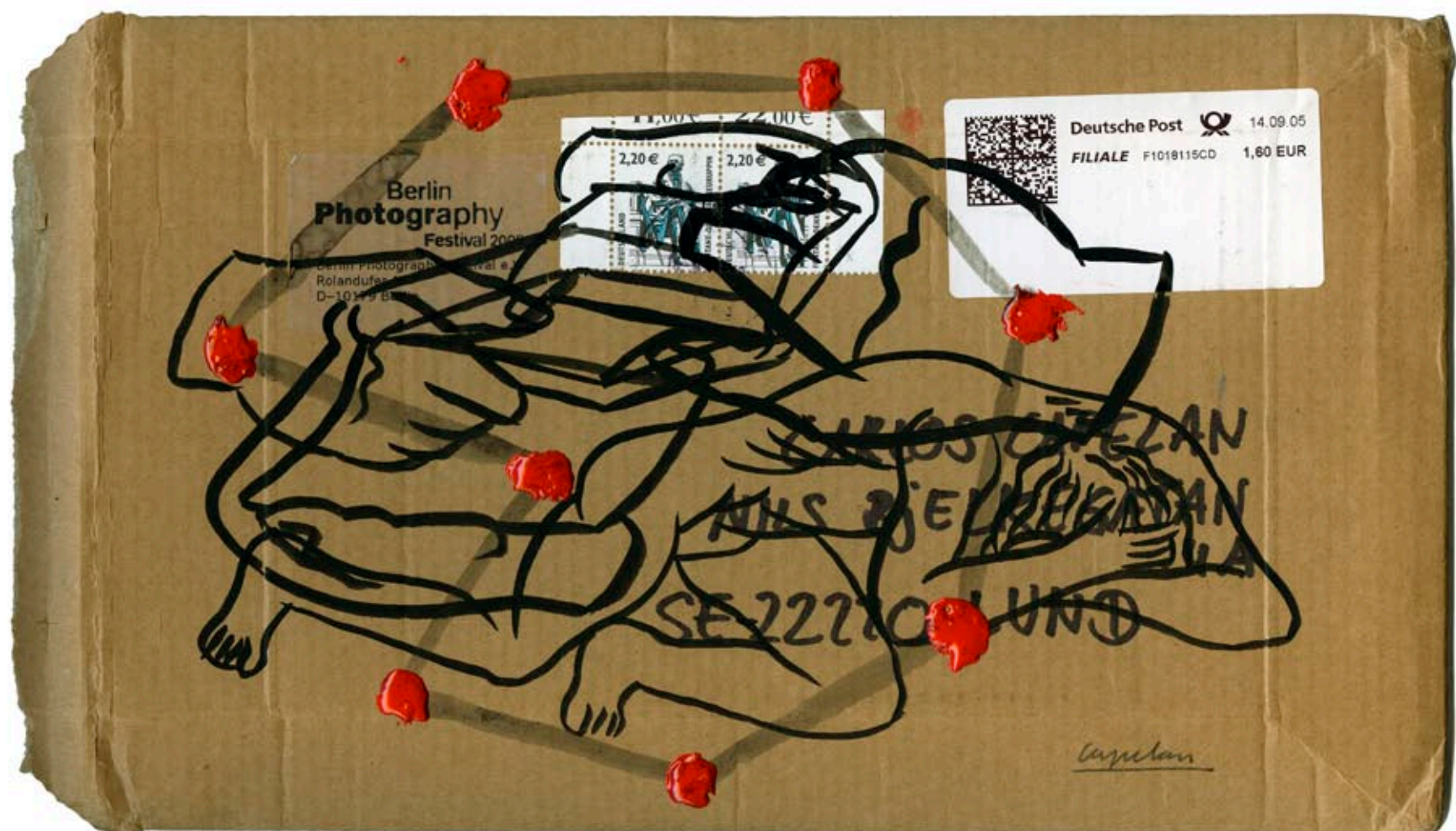
S-222, 20 LUND

Sweden

"IT SEEMS AXIOMATIC THAT IT IS
NOT POSSIBLE TO EXHIBIT OBJECTS
WITHOUT PUTTING A CONSTRUCTION
UPON THEM."

Please do not bend

Capelán



From the series Letters, 1991

Indian ink, soil and quotations on envelope, 23 x 32 cm
Jean Sellem Collection, Lund, Sweden

From the series Letters, 2005

Indian ink and sealing wax on envelope, 25 x 36 cm



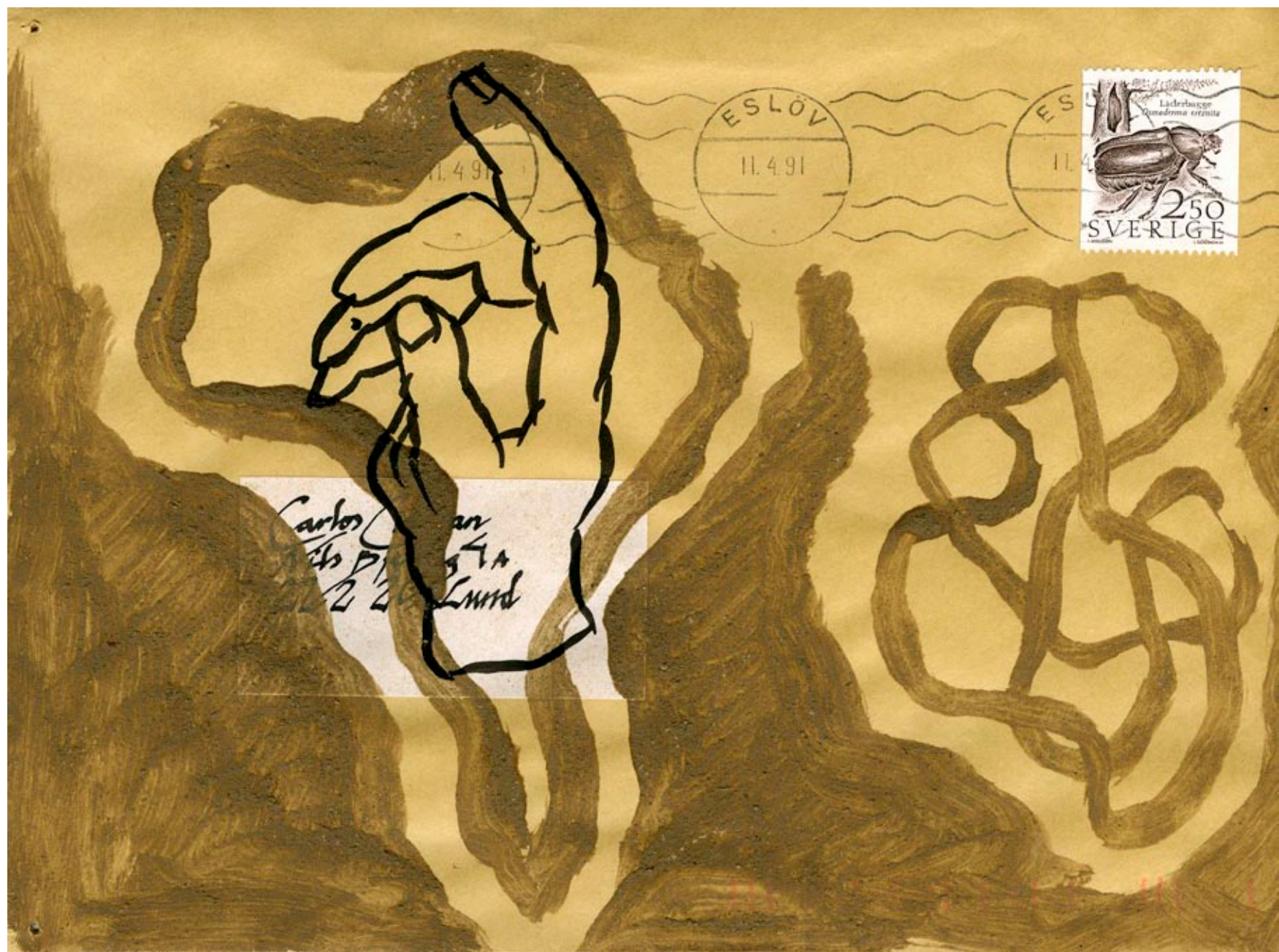


From the series Letters, 1991

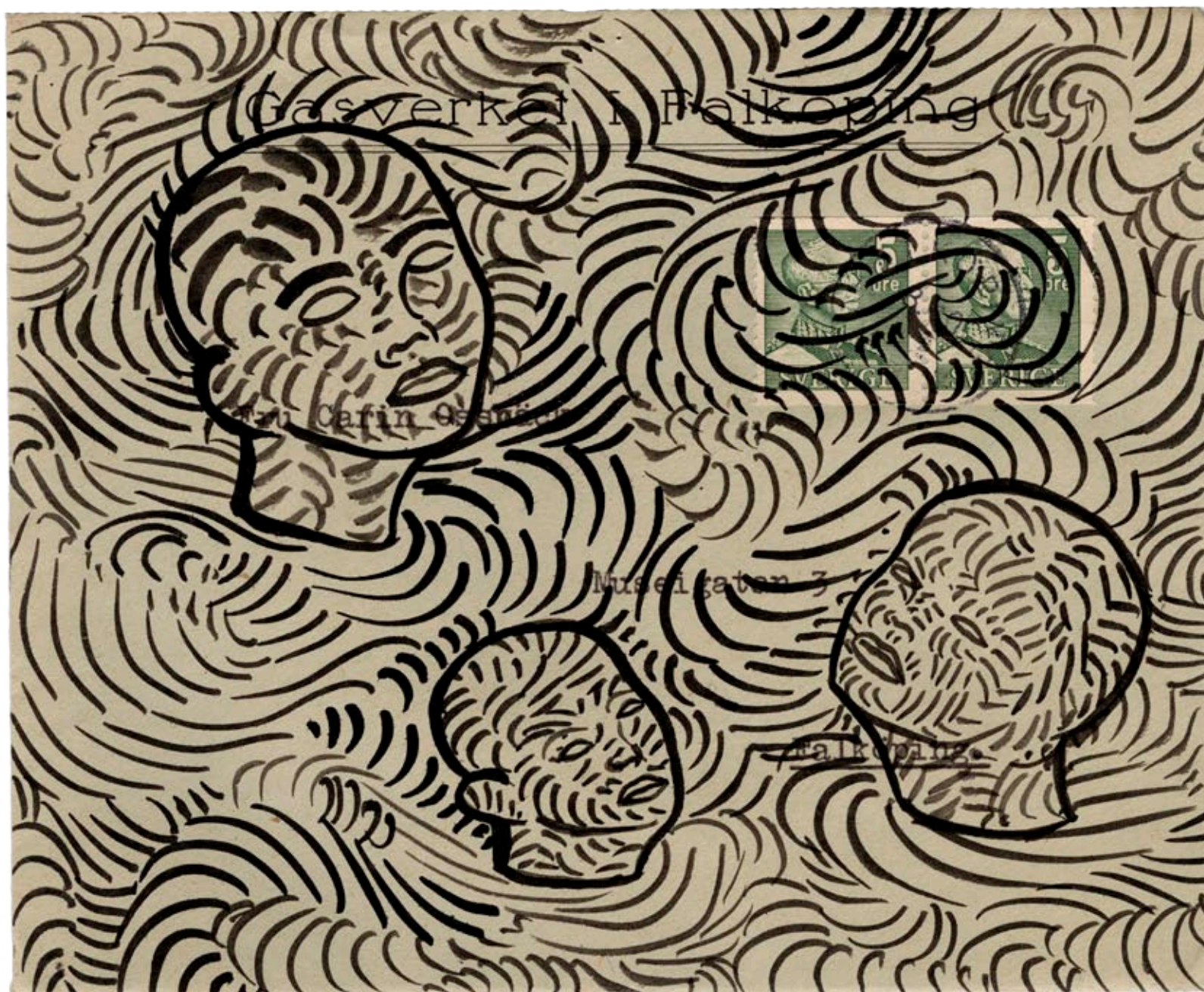
Soil and Indian ink on envelope, 12,2 x 16,4 cm

From the series Letters, 1991

Soil and Indian ink on envelope, 11,5 x 16 cm



Carlson
11.4.91
Lund



From the series Letters, 1991
Indian ink and soil on envelope, 16,1 x 22,8 cm

From the series Letters, 1986
Ink on envelope, 13 x 16 cm

II. The Scene of Art

Hooks

The second scene where the failure of representation operates is art. The system of art always constructs itself from maneuvers of representation, which substitute an object for its image and turns this sleight of hand into the principle of new truths. We know that the classic conception of representation, based on the complete appearance of the object, has failed. And this failure – the impossibility of reaching the object – marks the sphere of art with negativity, and colors it with melancholy.

Thus the critique of representation is part of the current agenda of art. At least since Kant, since the beginnings of modern art, art is defined precisely as the transcendental conflict between subject and object: a complicated history of crossings and missed encounters, of promises and deceits. The kingdom of the aesthetic – that of the sensible appearance, that of image – is a result of the inevitable theatre of shadows: the confused waiting room which precedes the kingdom of art. When the walls of this kingdom fall – when the autonomy of the aesthetic form is cancelled – the situation is even more complicated. How to represent that which is outside if one can no longer clearly distinguish an inside? In principle Hegel foretold the dislodging of the aesthetic by real things or by their concept. But the fact is that art continues to function and that its institutions have, in fact, strengthened, fed in part by the interests of the international markets. The questions are not resolved on such slippery terrain, but the scene of art is not cancelled either.

There is a provisional way out, an emergency exit: it is true that the metaphysical concept of representation (mimesis as the realization of presence) has collapsed but contemporary art – much like its theory, from which it does not differ overmuch – has been able to make this lack fruitful. Butler's

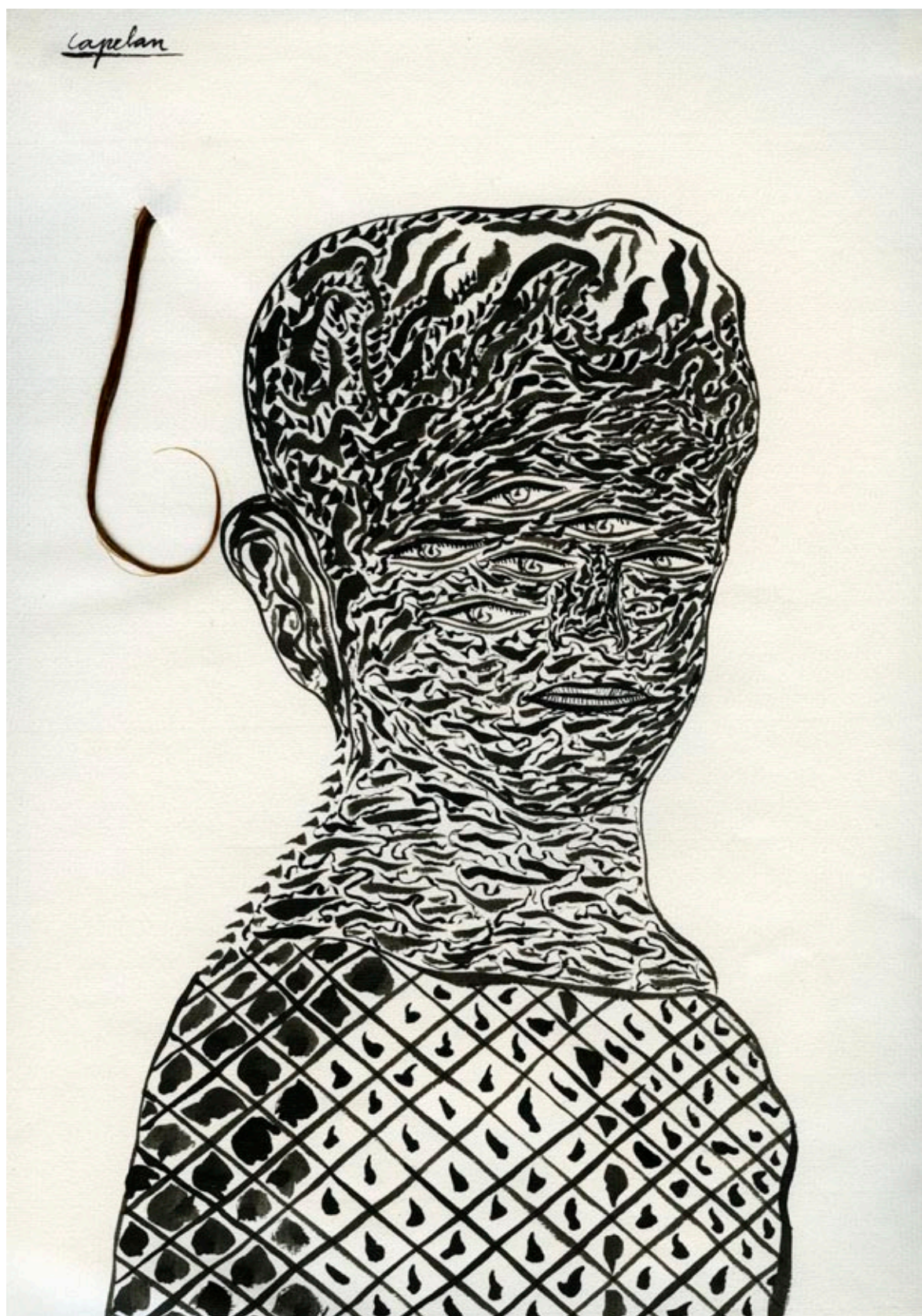
formula – in which the failure of representation can only be resolved by its own exhibition – can be cited again here. The power of contemporary art resides in the very impossibility of the encounter between sign and thing, its economy is set in motion by the fact that its anxieties are not consummated.

“Art lets go of the prey for the shadow”, says Lévinas⁸: opting quickly by the seduction of appearances. But, unsatisfied with mere illusion, art wants truth in both. Art does not renounce the real prey. It attempts to hunt it down underneath the veil which conceals and highlights it. Art is aware of the traps of representation, but tries to use its artifice to reach the real. It wants to mock the limit of the scene, name that which is unsheltered, history in all its misery and greatness, strange cultures, personal shipwrecks. Even further: it wants to reach both uncertain reality and the inaccessible real⁹. In order to do so, it must mock the circle of representation even if it can't undo it. Its only resource are images which can, for an instant, sustain themselves beyond the limit and flicker like lightening across the blackest depths of that which cannot be named.

Capelán works this imprecise scene, assuming the ruses of fiction to graze the elusive body of that which announces itself and withdraws. One of his figures captures this attempt well: that of the hook. This dispositif is similar to the Lacanian lure of the gaze: it is the trick that assures the object's appearance and sustains its aura. The artist says that he uses a hook when offering the spectator a lure in order to attract and challenge his/her gaze, and later, in order to disconnect the spectator, forcing him/her into foci, biases, and changes in points of view that open new perspectives of signification. This creates the possibility of escaping from the circle of representation for an instant and imagining what must exceed it.

⁸ Emmanuel Lévinas, *La realidad y su sombra, Libertad y mandato, Trascendencia y altura*, Editorial Trotta, Madrid, 2001, pág. 52. [Reality and its shadow. *Collected Philosophical Papers*. The Hague. Martinus Nijhoff, 1987.

⁹ The term “real” is used in the Lacanian sense of that which escapes the symbolic, that which cannot be represented.



Friend, 1987
Indian ink and hair on paper,
30,5 x 21,5 cm
Collection of the artist

Hooks imply games of irony, one of the fundamental mechanisms that art uses to distance itself from its own setting, observing it, commenting it, as if it were something outside itself. Some of Capelán's paintings, in which he paints with his hand instead of a brush, constitute a hook because they exhibit manual dexterity but advance concepts that have nothing to do with the art of painting. Threatened on one side, and attacked on the other, the observer is forced to remain on guard, distrusting that which is seen, forced to track meaning where it does not appear. The trajectory of the gaze is held in suspense – it is suspicious of the present-

ed object and assumes something beyond it, an interior, an invisible side that hides the key. Ordinary, vulgar objects, framed and exhibited as works of art, are also hooks, as well as the presentation in a traditional format of objects that could only be considered artistic in a contemporary register (that is to say, they do not acquire their "artistry" from intrinsic properties, but rather from the mechanisms of their exhibition). In a certain sense, we could say that writing acts as a hook: it exposes the word, but it in the end, acts as image.

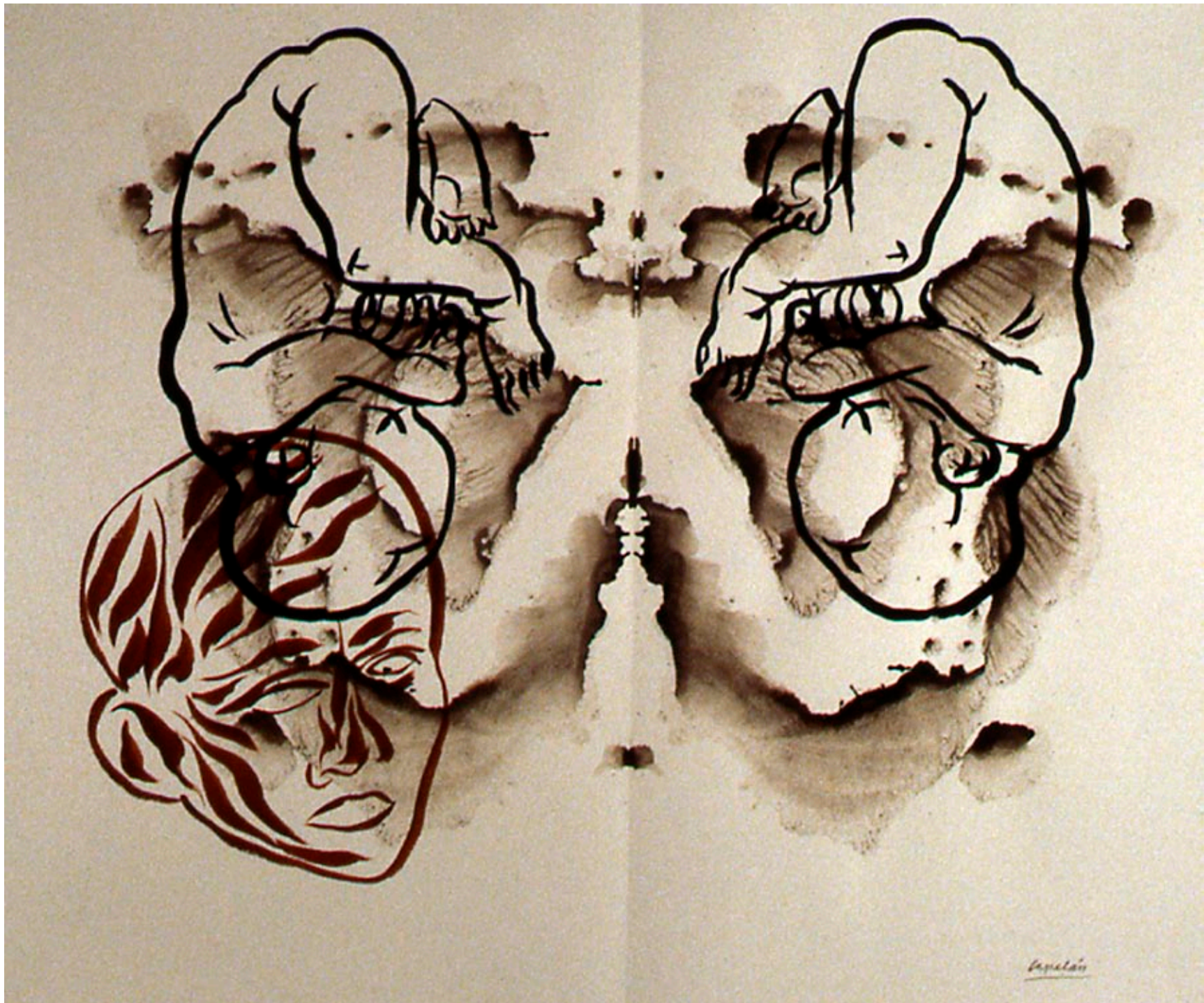


The Art of Language, from the series of unannounced performances, Lund 1985–87

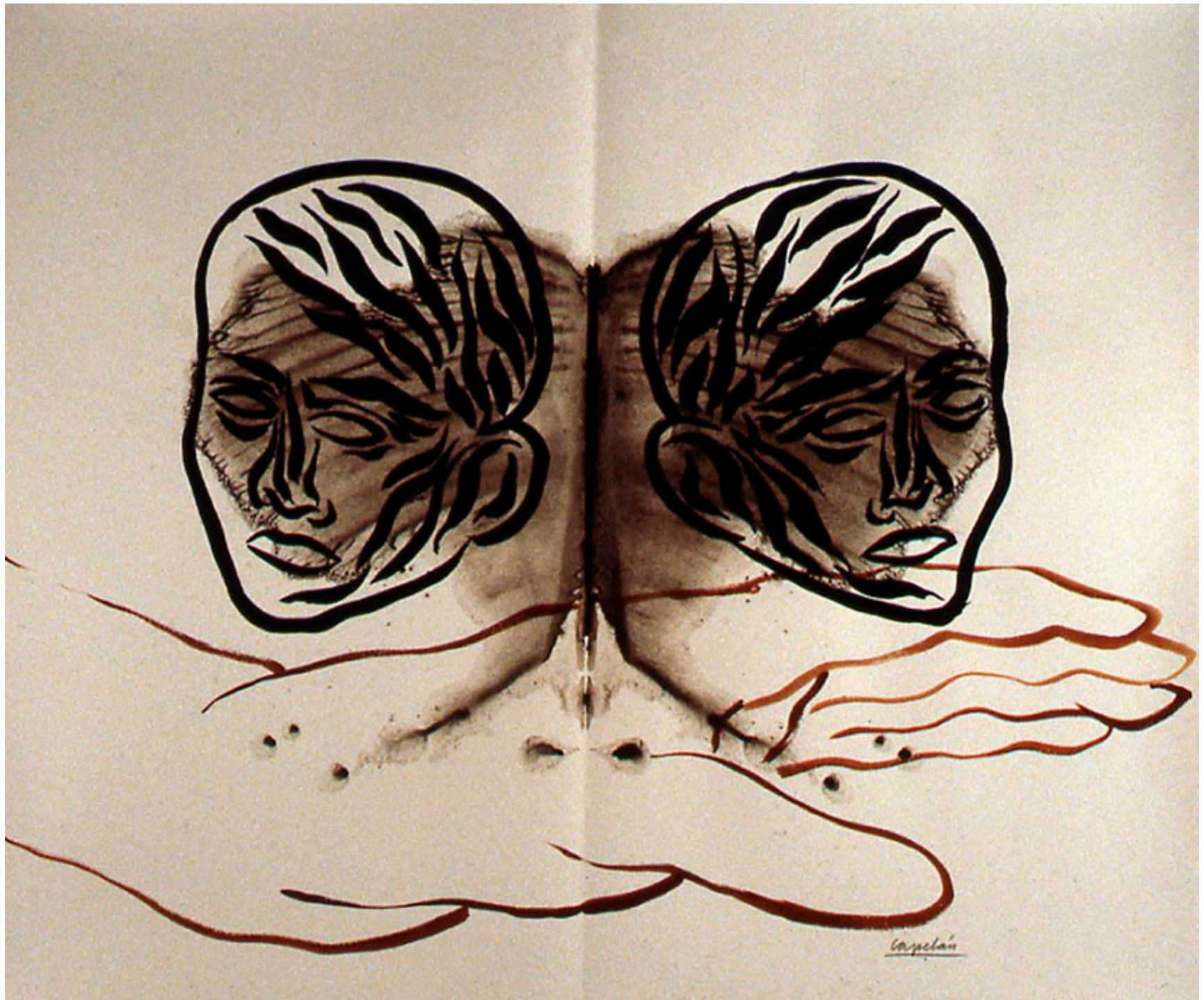
Two persons dressed in white force a third one and hang him from a rope. They submerge the head of the hanging man several times in a bucket with Indian ink. In that hanging position they use him and his head as a brush to paint on large sheets of paper. Everything happens very fast. Afterwards, the two of them hang up the resulting painting and leave. With Miguel Peña and Kay Foster



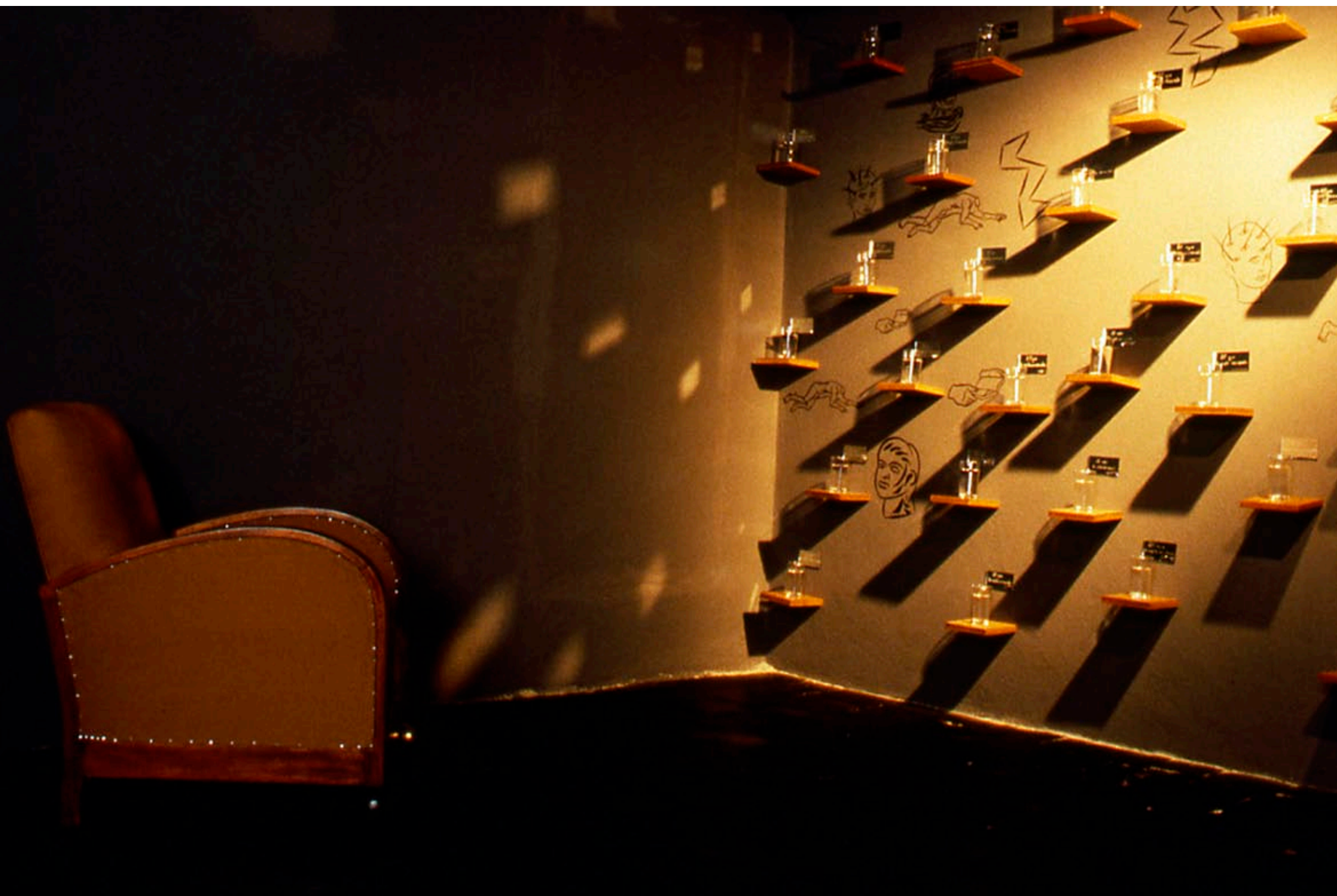
From the series Letters, 1986
Indian ink and razor blades on
burned envelope, 11 x 16 cm



From the Rorschach series, 1991
Soil, red ocher and Indian ink on paper,
75 x 64 cm







Entertainment, 1994

Installed object, chair, spot lights, figures painted on the wall, shelves, glasses of water and mirrors with the inscription: "the eye that you see, its not an eye because you see it..."
Galeria Fernando Quintana, Bogota, Colombia. *To the left, detail.*



Homage to the Native Nations of Germany, 1999

Installation; wooden wall and floor, tent, chair, a hole in the floor,
a painting, bronze sculpture and wooden lists
IFA Gallery, Berlin, Germany



Desembarco de los 33 en la Agraciada, 1998
Museo Sofia Imbert, Caracas, Venezuela

Installation, 1986
Skanska Museum, Pictura,
Lund, Sweden

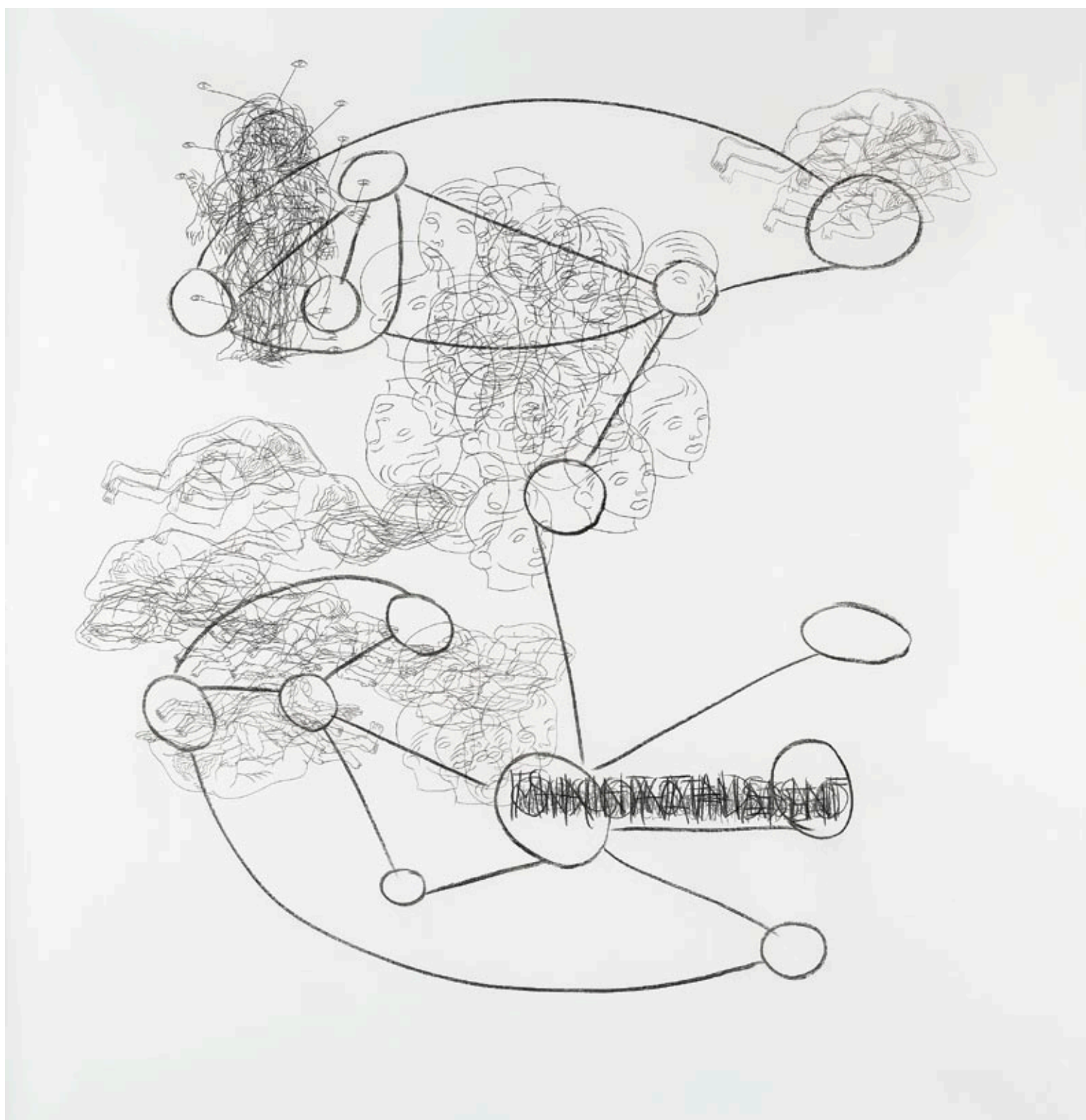


On the Illegible

Seeking to trespass the limits of the symbolic order — the threshold of the scene of representation — Capelán forces language to its extreme, exploring its most remote margins, pressuring it to turn into image, writing, so that it opens up to that which is undecipherable in it. Derrida, let us not forget, maintained that reading meant acknowledging a principle of illegibility. If language is not capable of making its meanings transparent, then those meanings must be sought out in the wandering drifts of the sign, in its excesses and failures, in its silences and the spaces between.

This search harbors ethical and political meanings: it implies mistrusting language's omnipresence, disputing its unidirectionality, challenging the power of its fixed codes. Toward this end, Capelán invokes cunning tricks in order to destabilize the signifier and provoke the proliferation of meaning. These hooks seek to revert the hollow opened up by representation: the emptiness left by what is missing. The attempt to outwit the impossibility of grasping the real requires diverse strategies that escape the grammar of form: "The questions which count," says Fabri, "are tactical rather than syntactic."¹⁰

¹⁰ Paolo Fabri, *El giro semi-ótico*, Gedisa, Barcelona, 1999, p. 105.



Drawing, 2003

Pencil and charcoal on paper, 150 x 140 cm

Drawing, 1987

Indian ink, soil and red ocher on book page, 23 x 17 cm
Jean Sellem Collection, Lund, Sweden

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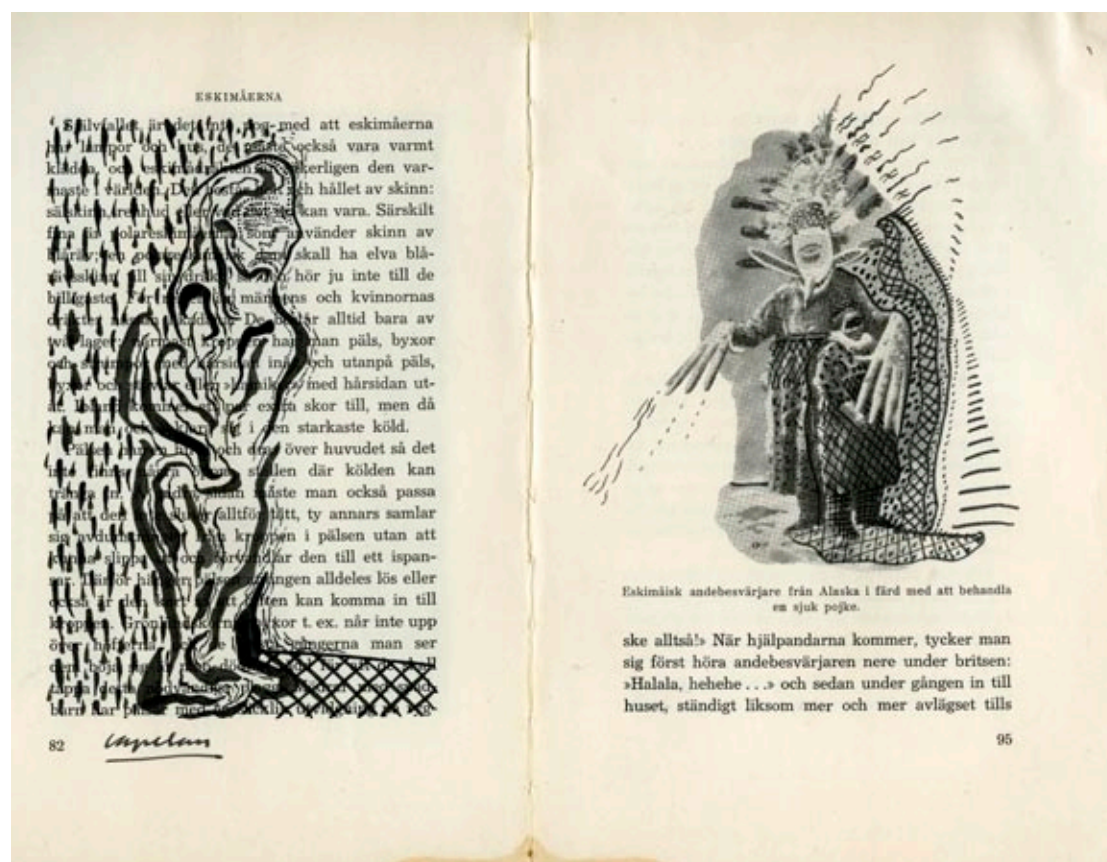
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His 1986 piece, “The Primitives” tackles the indeterminate conflict between image and text by manipulating a book. The volume is invaded by figures that come into tension with words and illustrations; they usurp their space or negotiate with them over third spaces. For example, in the chapter The primitives Capelán’s drawings interfere with the contents of the essay, demanding that a European ethnocentric ethnology be read from another place and that ethnographic photography itself be questioned. This operation constitutes, on the other hand, a certain position in relation to particular questions, once again concerned with representation, that keep contemporary art awake at night. I am referring, in this case, to the problem of “contentism”. Once formal autonomy has given way, art takes up different epistemological discourses such as philosophy,

psychoanalysis, sociology, anthropology, etc. But if art can no longer hold onto aesthetic form as a divider, how can it avoid dissolving into these different fields? The question does not have an absolute answer because form and content enter into contingent and variable debates that are, a priori, unsolvable. Art opens itself up to extra-artistic contents, but these must be, albeit minimally, determined by material form so that they might appear before the gaze. Capelán’s piece faces this problem directly: it maintains an extra-artistic discourse (a critique of anthropological colonialism), but it does so from debates about aesthetics: the strength of the stroke (accentuated by its affiliation with a certain characteristic tendency of Latin American drawing), expressiveness, the command of graphic space, resources of visual composition, etc.



From the serie The Primitives, 1985
Indian ink on book page, 21 x 30 cm
Collection of the artist

polynesiska farkosterna är de elegantaste och sjödugligaste något naturfolk på det hela taget kan åstadkomma. Det förekommer många olika slag från de minsta till de största.

Nära kusten nöjer de sig med en urholkad trädstam, men för att den inte skall kantra i sjögång, är en stock av sårt påförtärligt långt ute på ena sidan. Den fasthålls med elst tvärspiror och vilar på vattnet. En lik stock, som kallas utriggare, är nog för att hålla den smala karoten i jämvikt. På riktiga färdkärnor är en liten utriggarkarot, likväl inte tillräcklig. Därör bygs resvacklor av plankor som bärs ihop med tag av korallbrädder och kastarades i fogarna med ett slags gummi och i stället för att använda utriggare förordade man två bär medelst en plattform till ett fartyg. På plattformen uppfördes ett litet hus som tjänstgjorde som kajuta, och de stora hövdingar och krigsskänor följde med höga, praktfullt smidda stävar och träbänkar. Det fanns båtar som hade en längd av till exempel tretio meter och rymde ända till 140 man, vilka ofta paddlade i takt medan de försåts med ledare och rörelser. En del krigsskuter hade en extra plattform, där till exempel krigsgrepp kunde förvaras. Det är intressant att det i dessa båtar ofta fanns ett utrymme för att lagra mat. När de färdades i större båtar av det största slaget, som ofta hade en längd av 100 meter, användades dessa farkoster.



På Nya Zeeland hälsar man genom att gnida näsorna mot varann.

Detta fartyg tog sig ut på en färd med en polynesisch panna på roarna och på andra sidan en krigsskuta. En krigsskuta berättar att ha på en gång så en hel flotta besatt en ö. 1890 fanns det 70 mindre fartyg i varann och 100 mindre fartyg i dess flotta.

ker hos oss påträffar sådana föremål som naturfolket betraktar som heliga.

Vid middagstiden på festens nionde dag blir ormarna hövdligen badade, och på eftermiddagen äger själva ormdansarna rum. Prästerna, tillhörande antilopernas brödrskap, begärs från sin helgedom med översteprästen i spetsen ut på pueblons öppna plats och lågar hövdligt fyra varv runt den, för att sedan ställa sig i rad bredvid ett skjul där ormarna blivit inbista. Spänningen blir allt större — nu visar sig ormdansarna, anförda av sin överstepräst... Också de går fyra gånger runt den öppna platsen och ställer sedan upp sig i en rad mitt emot antilopprästerna.

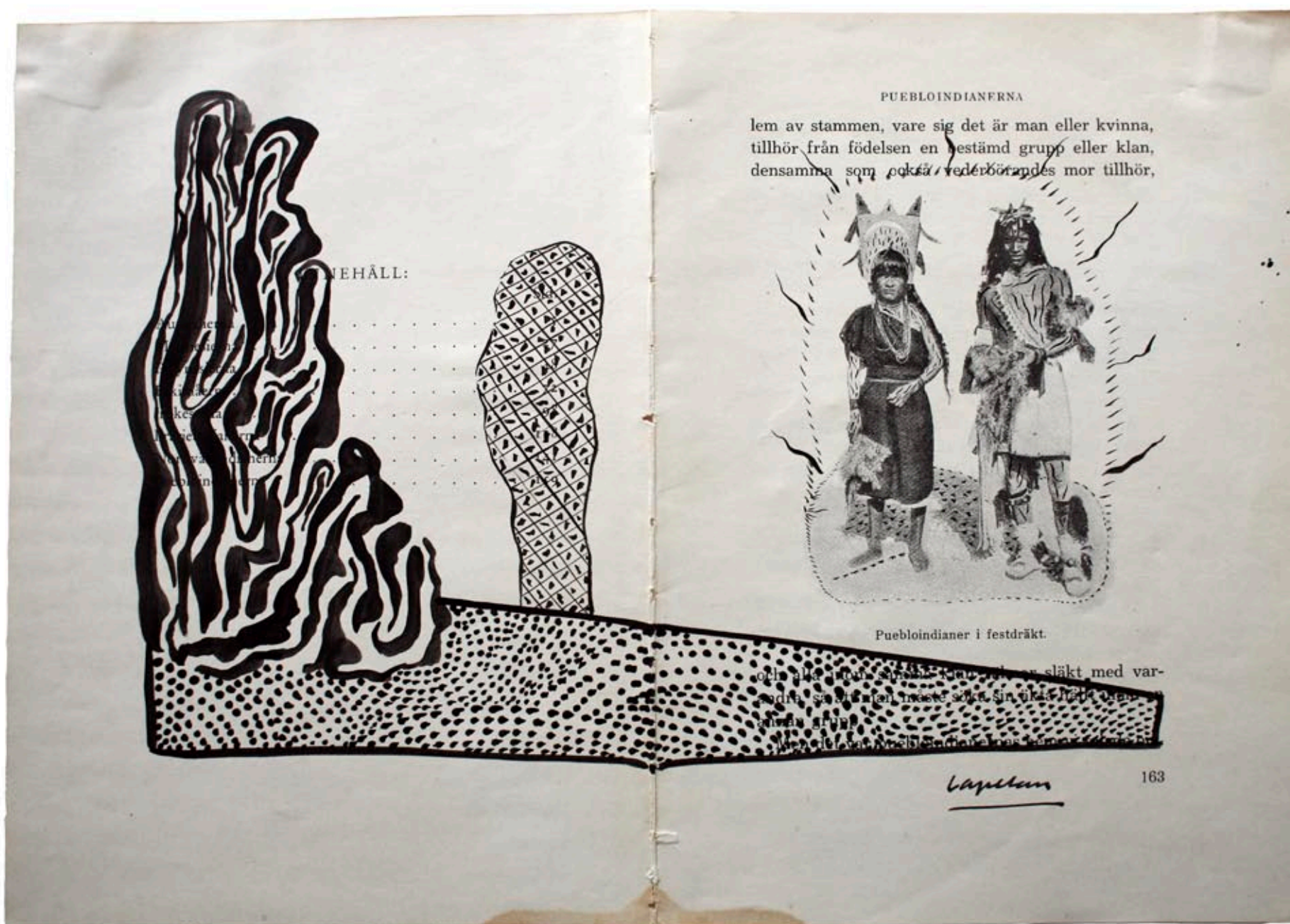
Först nu börjar den egentliga dansen, som är en avskräckande och vid för åskådarna som är tillräckligt fruktansfulla. Två och två gånger går ormprästerna runt där ormarna ligger. Den ena av dem bär en av de giftiga reptilerna i handen. Den andre bär en av de ovan omtalade »fjäderkinnorna» med vilken han försöker lugna djuret och avlägsna dess uppmärksamhet ifall det blir nöddigt, men ett under är det i alla fall att inget sker. Så dansar de nu fram stämpande i marken och vaggande med kroppen tills de låter ormen sluta men bara för att återvända till ormhopan och ta ett nytt djur. På det sättet dansas det efter hand med dem alla.

ris på bara kroppen. På detta sätt blir han invigd i stammens hemligheter, och nu tar en av de närva-



En ormpräst på väg ned i kivan.

rande masken av så att han kan se att det inte är andar som omger honom, utan endast hans gamla bekanta från byn. Kvinnorna får däremot aldrig



From the serie The Primitives, 1985
Indian ink on book page, 21 x 30 cm
Jean Sellem Collection, Lund, Sweden

From the serie The Primitives, 1985
Indian ink on book page, 21 x 30 cm
Jean Sellem Collection, Lund, Sweden

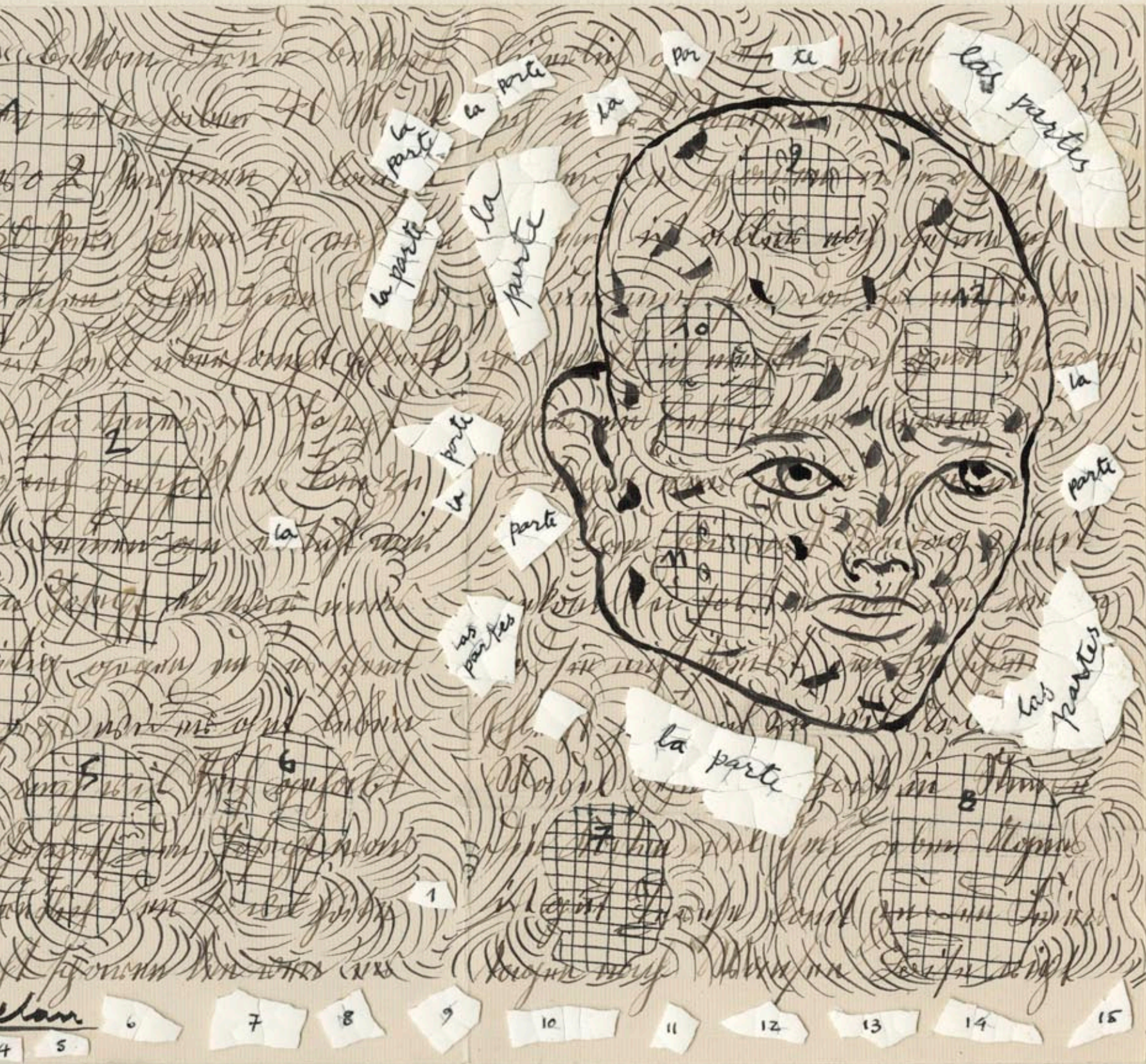
Other distortions of the destiny of the book should also be considered assaults on linguistic self-sufficiency. In certain performances that Capelán carried out in the houses he took over, characters sat atop piles of books, tearing pages out of them and tossing them in the air until the books were left mangled and dismembered. In contrast to a certain interpretive naiveté – which arrived at the conclusion that this gesture was an act of neo-fascist vandalism – we could read this action, from a Derridean perspective, as the triumph of the text over the book, in which the aphoristic, disruptive energy of writing acts before the book’s encyclopedic logocentrism: this is why “the destruction of the book (. . .) denudes the surface of the text.”¹¹

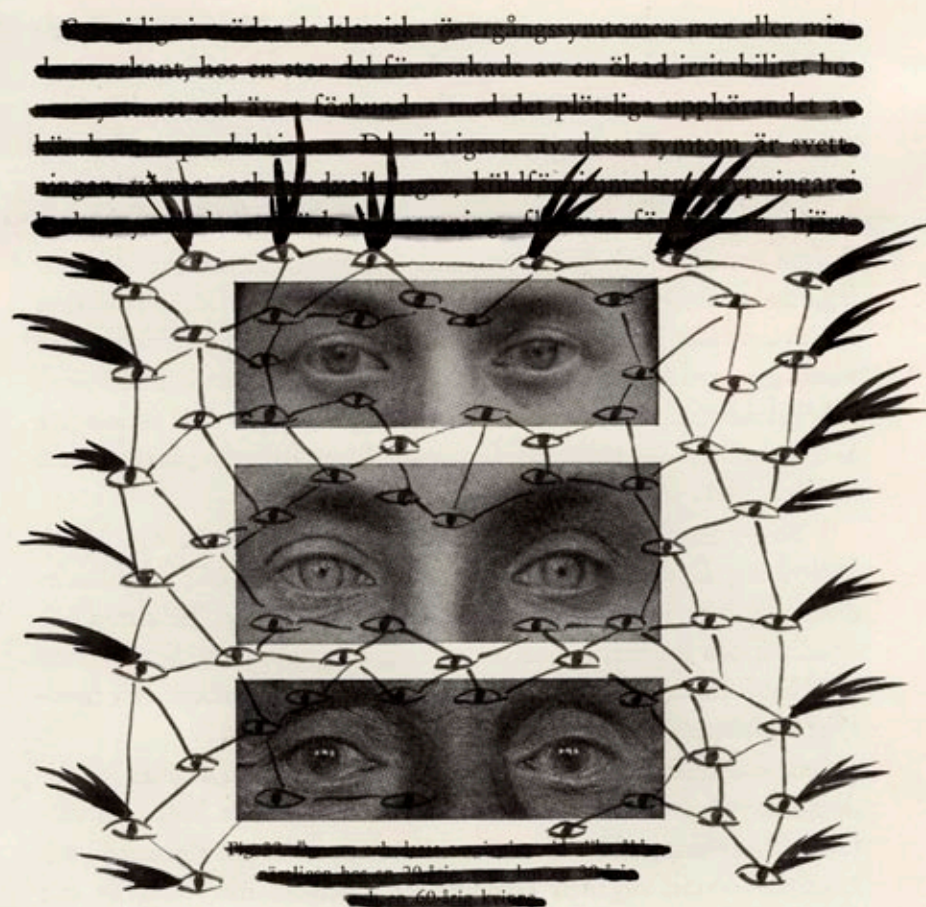
¹¹ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Johns Hopkins Press: Baltimore, 1976, p. 18.

Drawing, 1986

Ink and egg shell on letter, 12 x 17,5 cm
Private collection, Sweden





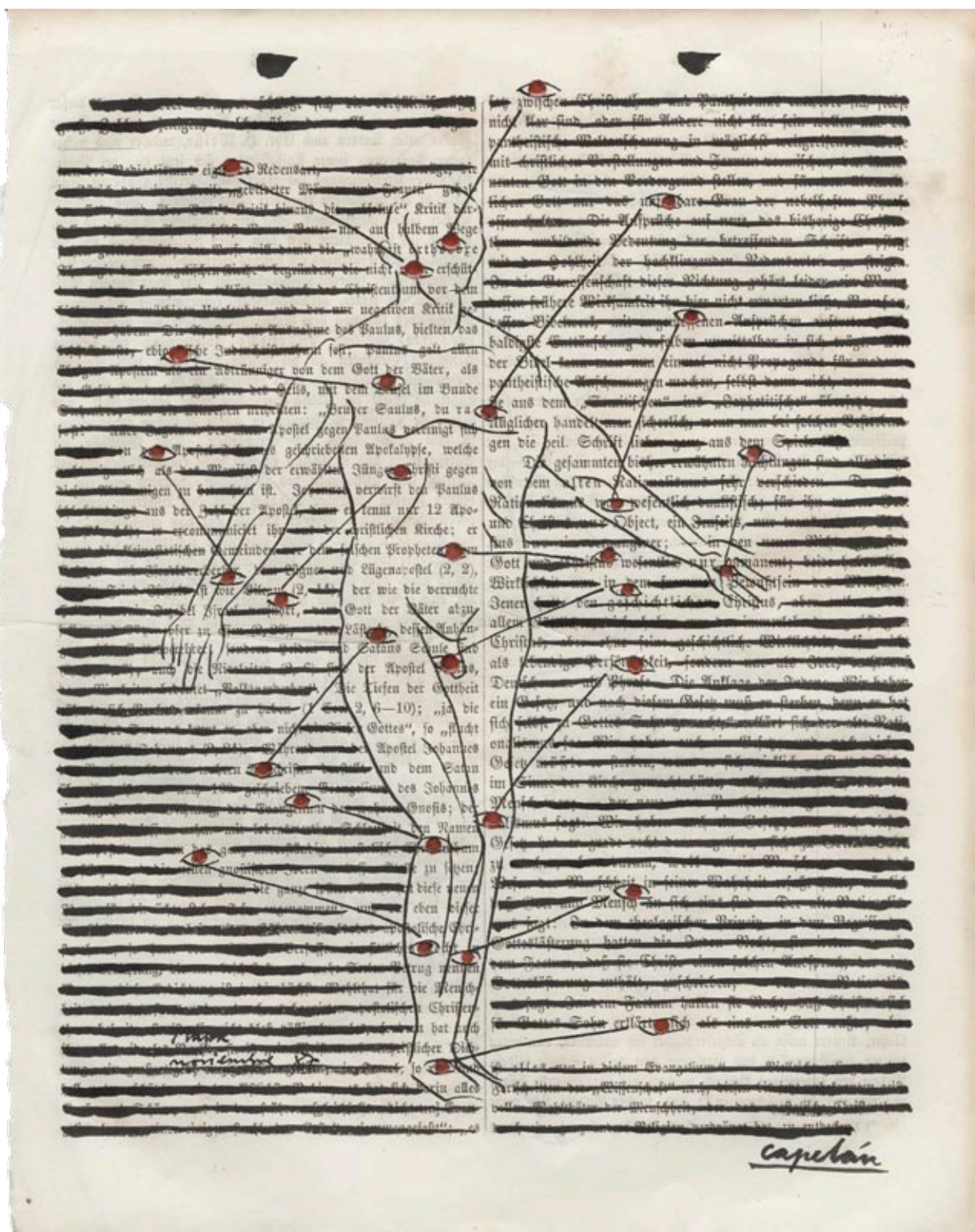


Capelan

Drawing, 1986
Indian ink on book page,
25,3 x 19 cm



Drawing on wall, 1994 Soil, Indian ink, red ochre, shelf and glass of water
Galería Fernando Quintana, Bogotá, Colombia

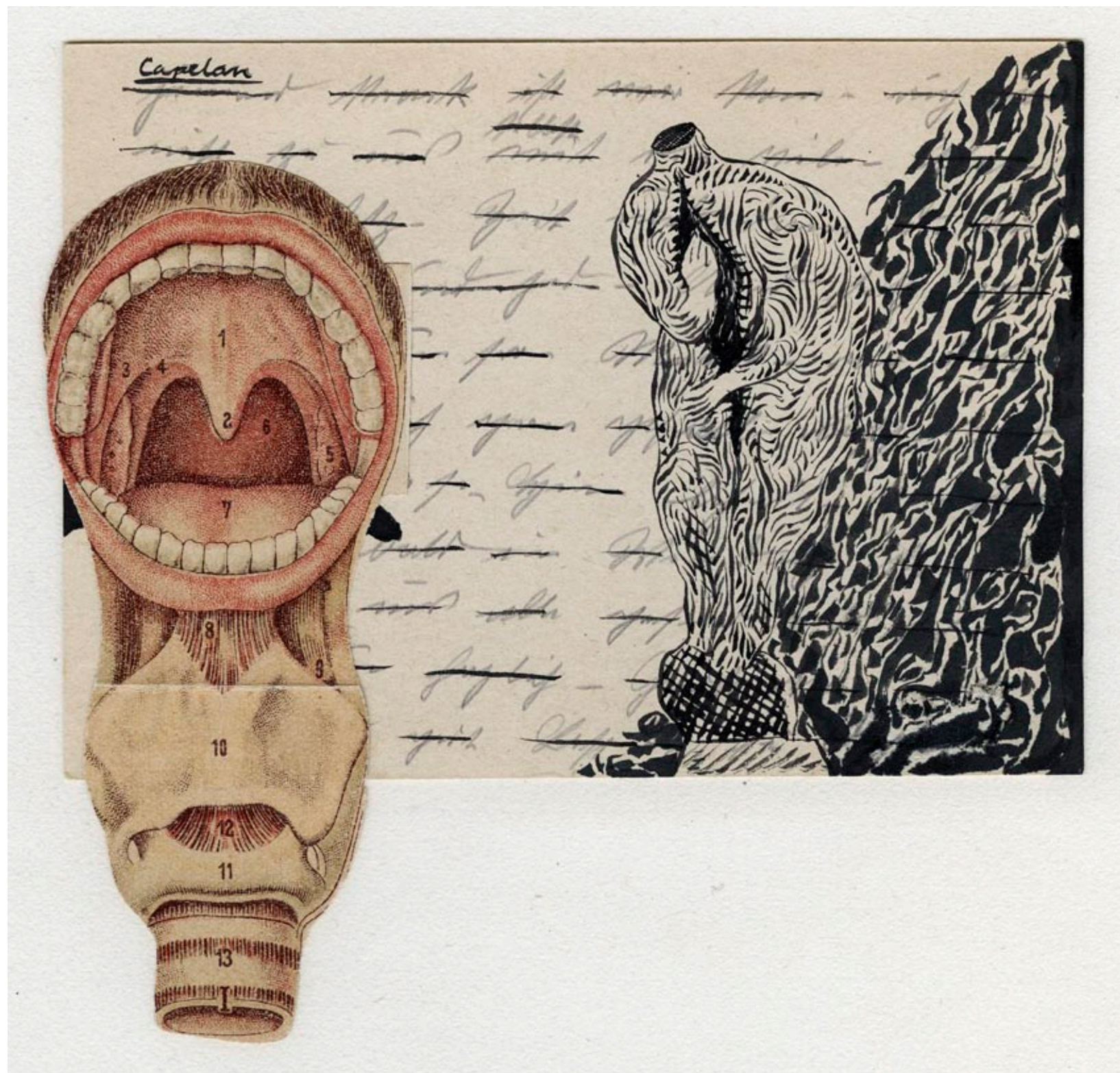


Collage, 1986

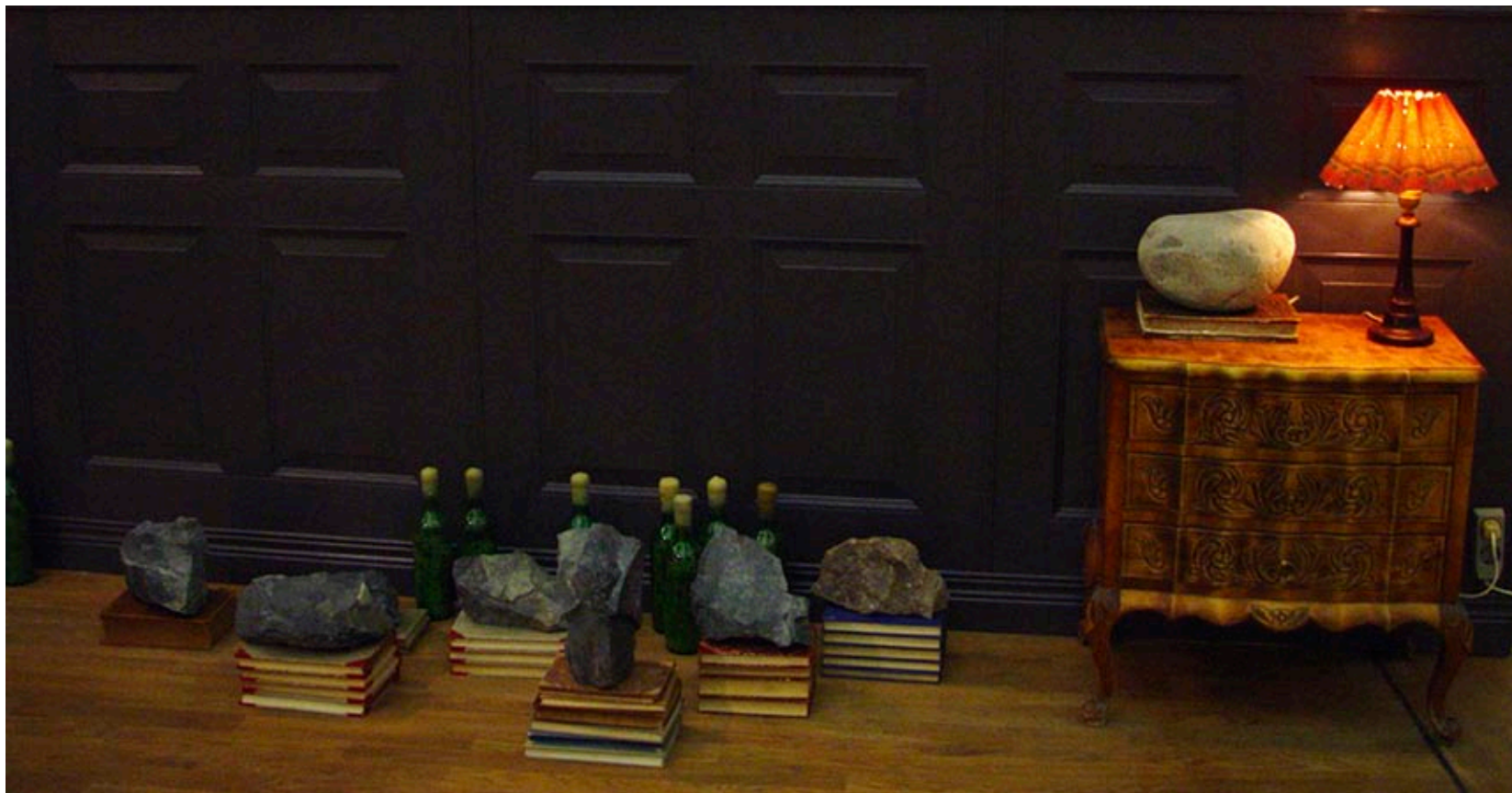
Collage and Indian ink on letter,
15 x 16 cm

Drawing, 1986

Indian ink and sealing wax on
book page, 25 x 20 cm



Likewise, the successive presentations of books, fixed or flattened by pieces of rock, expose writing's revenge against the book that remains closed in order to keep watch over the illegible and ensure difference; the failure – but not the annulment – of meaning. The tightly closed nature of books requires investigation into other codes that will not reveal the final answer, but will be able to inhabit a productive space for the search. (When I asked Capelán about those sealed volumes, he firmly answered, “I don’t speak about that.”)



The living room, (detail), 2002
Henie Onstad Museum, Oslo, Norway

Maps and landscapes, 1992
Installation
Lunds Konsthall, Lund, Sweden



Objects, 1991...2008
Books and stones



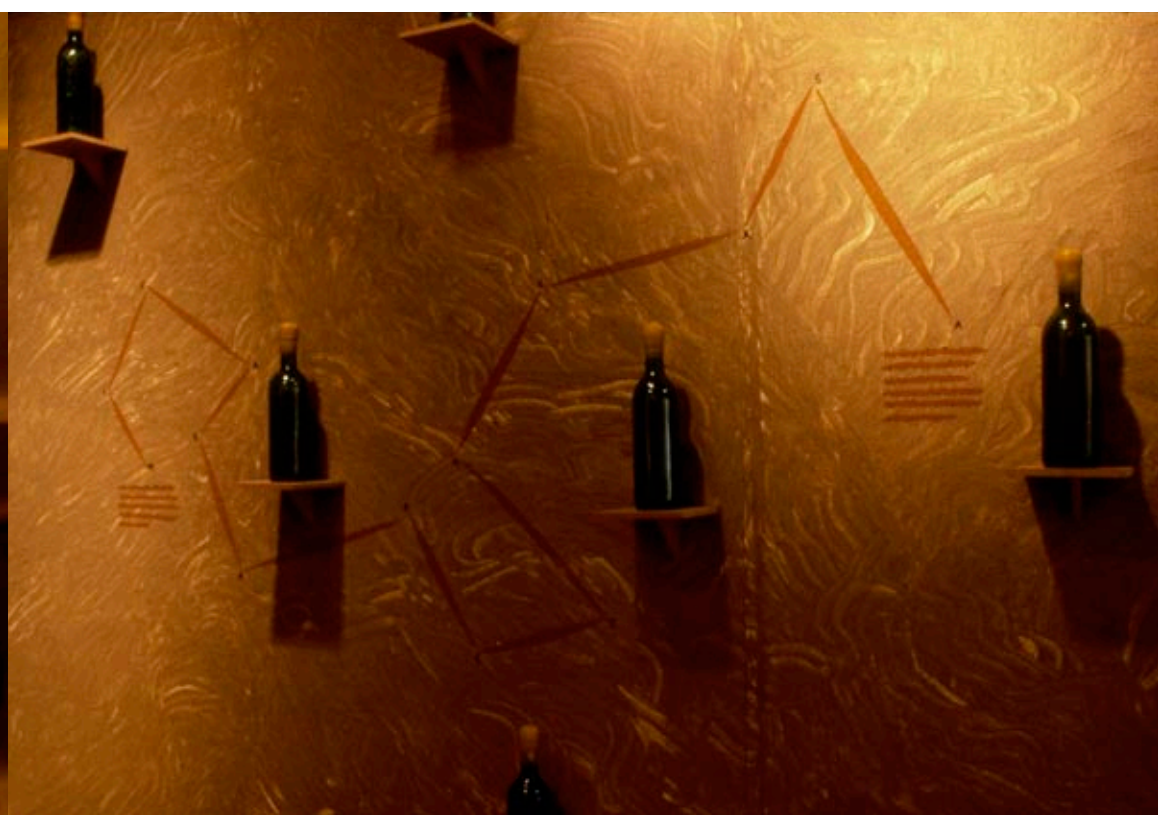
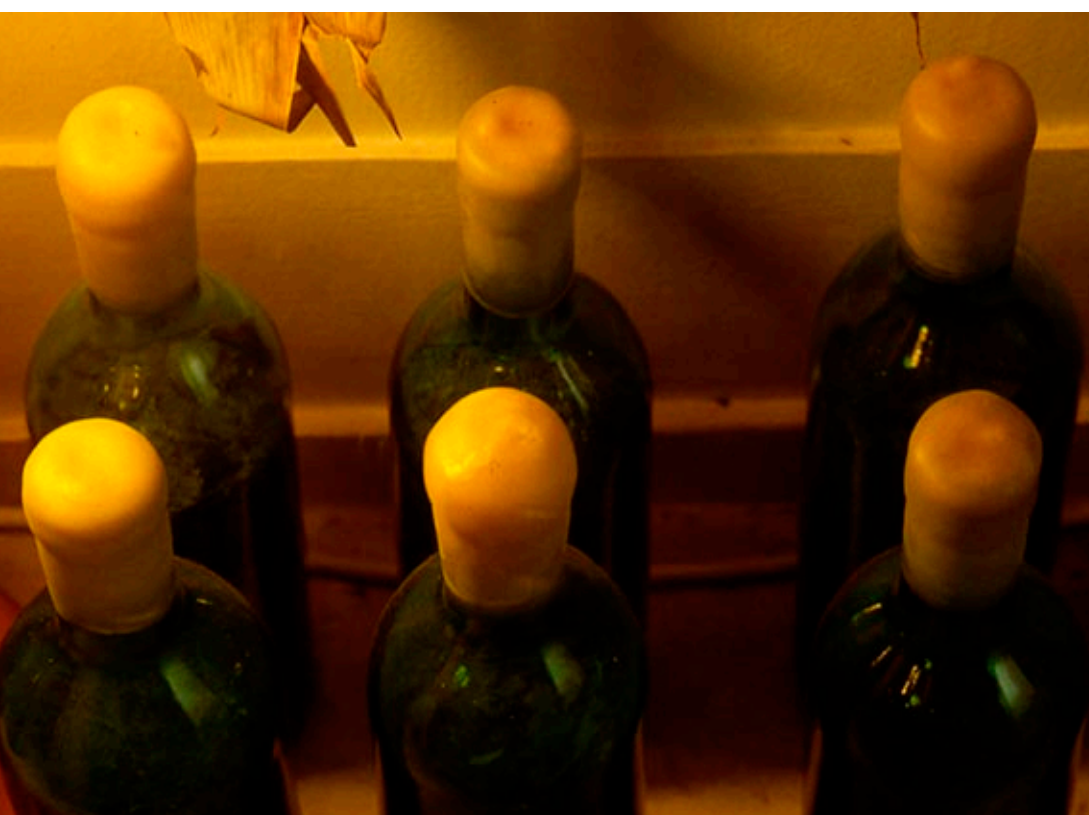
I suppose he would also refuse to talk about the burned books whose ashes were preserved in bottles as if they were urns. However, he did relay to me the story on which this work is based: a woman, who was unable to remember the tragic experience she suffered at a Nazi concentration camp, found herself with another woman, who did remember her own experience. This confrontation with the emptiness of her memory, realized through a detour through the memory of the other, moved her to such a degree that she spent the whole night obsessively writing that which she had forgotten. But, how to record a missing memory? How does one make emptiness into a sign? Along these lines, Lyotard offers the question (that would seem to refer specifically to this case): “The point would be to recall what could not have been forgotten because it was not inscribed. Is it possible to recall if it was not inscribed? Does it even make sense?”¹² And later he replies: “It makes sense to try to recall something (let’s call it something) which has not been inscribed if the in-

scription of this something broke the support of the writing or the memory. [. . .] So there is a breaking presence which is never inscribed nor memorable.”¹³ Lacan says that what has been foreclosed and not admitted into the symbolic order returns as the real; so how to now admit this unnamable real?

Let us continue now with the story: finishing her writing, the woman burns the papers that sustained it. She burns, at the very least, the calligraphic strokes of an inscription (we don’t know if she burns the register of language). She saves writing, rendering it illegible, displacing a truth that could not be sustained by words or paper: not even by memory. Capelán completes the gesture of saving the ashes, residues of other texts, in sealed bottles. The enigma is saved as well as the possibility that language cannot be sealed and that there is a place (always differentiated) for a presence that destroys even if it is nameless.

¹² Lyotard, op. cit., p. 54.
¹³ Ibidem, p. 55.

Bottles containing ashes of burned books A) 1992 Lunds Konsthall, Lund, Sweden,	C) 1993 Kulturhuset, Stockholm
	D) 1993 Kulturhuset, Stockholm

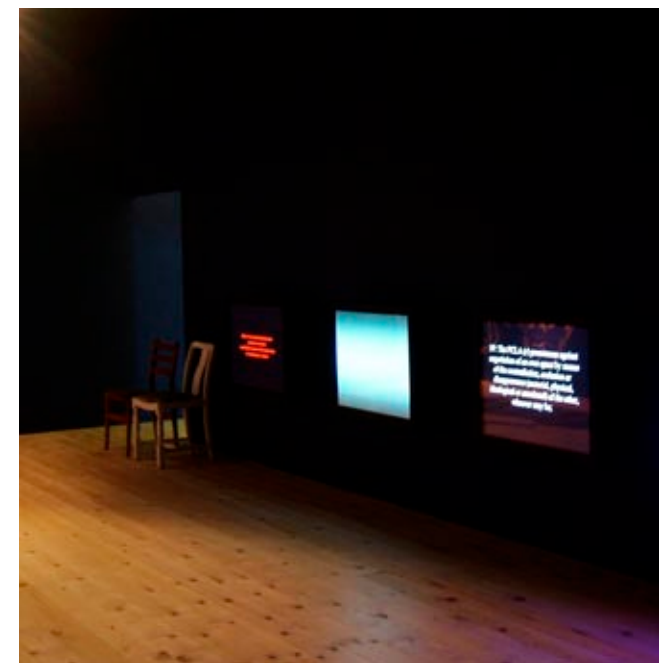


The Project Post-Colonial Liberation Army (Dematerialization) is displayed through manifestos which, by way of aphorisms and sharp pronouncements, depart from certain strategic postulations of the system of art, in order to reposition them within the context of a diverse set of pragmatic questions. The work is composed of printed texts that are piled upon the installation floor so that spectators may take them: but sometimes the texts escape from the format of a sheet of paper and circulate anonymously on the Internet (disseminating themselves according to the logic of the net, creating unease with regards to their motives), or are framed as if they constituted pieces of graphic work. In this way, the project invokes ingenious language games in order to disorientate the fundamentalism of military mottos and canonical pronouncements about art.

The work is ironic with respect to the rhetoric of art systems, particularly avant-garde manifestos and the revolutionary proclamations of modernity. But, like all truly ironic gestures, it does not attempt this in order to judge and condemn intricate theoretical operations and old Leninist formulas, but rather to wink at them complicitly and playfully challenge their axioms. In this way, it attempts to enable re-readings capable of undoing the dogmatic solemnity of texts and putting other questions into circulation,

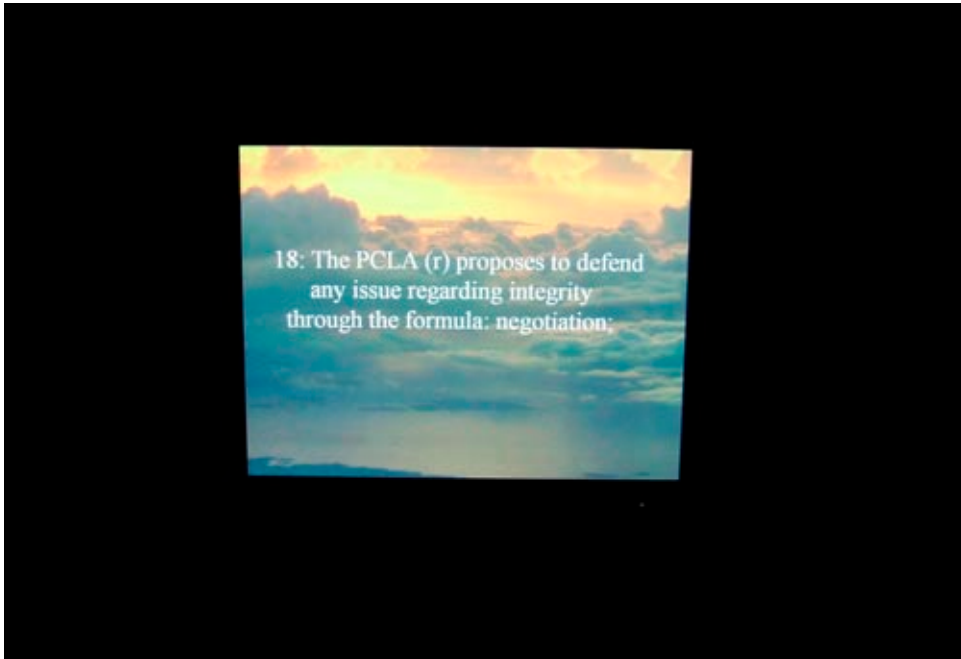
camouflaging them in theoretical orthodoxy while undermining it. Capelán replaces the figure of revolution with that of re-materialization, a term which he turns into a synonym of, or at least an equivalent notion to, the Derridean concept of deconstruction. He seeks, as such, to infiltrate enemy terrain in order to unsettle the orthodoxy of its convictions and create the possibility of parallel readings. This irony makes possible a “writing of writing,” a reflexive distance through which the transgression of desire can sneak past.

The work leads to an ethical question: it is linked to the imperative to construct alternative subjectivities through which to assume political positions before history, beyond the models of the avant-garde or the codes of party politics. That is to say, the imperative to construct flexible identities, ready to participate in the public sphere through contingent positions, ready to transgress the symbolic order – the very system of representation – in order to see what takes place outside the scene and suggest new exits. This position does not forget the tragedy of the dictatorship but invents other images so that it does not turn into a cliché. “They fucked us over, they tortured us and we keep on going, kid,” says Capelán in his peculiar central-South American tone. We keep aspiring to create worlds of meaning.



Self-portrait (detail), 2003
Framed communiqués of
the PCLA(r)
Bienal do MERCOSUR,
Porto Alegre, Brazil

**Fake videos of the PCLA(r),
2004**
Seven plasma screens
Baltic Mill, Birmingham, UK



Display cabinets

There is no such thing as objects that are intrinsically artistic: objects become artistic (or not) according to their contingent position before the gaze. The spectator sees and is seen by the object displayed (Benjamin, Lacan) and at a certain unknowable and extremely brief point, at the intersection of gazes, a disturbance, a spark or short-circuit is produced in the object's signification; at the end of the day this is more or less what we call art. "Anything that is put on display in a glass case creates relational diagrams," says Capelán. That is to say, *mise-en-scène*, the presentation of diverse objects before the gaze – independently of their aesthetic qualities – constitute an aesthetic operation; these acts force us to imagine conformations and categories, oppositions, and constellations.

Capelán employs this principle in order to construct "hooks," gaze-hunting devices. With the tiny, crescent residues of his own fingernails, he writes or draws ambiguous figures that suspend the signified, causing it to oscillate between the game of forms and the materiality of corporeal remains (and their dense meanings). Freely dispersed, the associations are demarcated by the ordering work of forms that sketch out unknown writings, representations of clouds or maps, or purely abstract geometries (such as the decorations of Guaraní earthenware throughout the entire Southern Cone of South America where the ornamental

motif is constituted by sharp ridges etched in by the rhythmic pressure of nails on clay).

At times what is exhibited in the display case is itself a taxonomic diagram (the order of any classification whatsoever) or the very economy of repetition (the sequential ordering of one single object that insists on reiterating its presence, and by doing so, altering it). On the other hand, the display cases point to the figure of the collection that at the same time mobilizes imaginary representations of historical, aesthetic, and social categories.

But the display cases not only generate formal associations and awaken significant resonances; they also represent themselves. (Let us not forget that representation always contains an instance of self-representation: the preferred artistic moment, since it creates the possibility of distance, reflection, and irony). The shelf has a visual presence that impacts the configuration of the installation space. But it is not simply any material presence: it is the very device of representation. The display case erects a space to create the illusion of the scene. Lacan calls this artifice, which acts as the scaffolding of desire, *bâti*¹⁴: the artist creates a theatrical assembly in order to seduce the gaze (a hook Capelán would say), that is to say, in order to conceal/reveal the object; to overturn it through impulse and to imbue it with aura.

¹⁴ See this concept in Mayette Viltard, "Foucault, Lacan: La lección de las Meninas", in *Litoral. La opacidad sexual II*, École Lacanienne de Psychanalyse, Edelp, 28, Córdoba, Argentina, October 1999, p. 129.



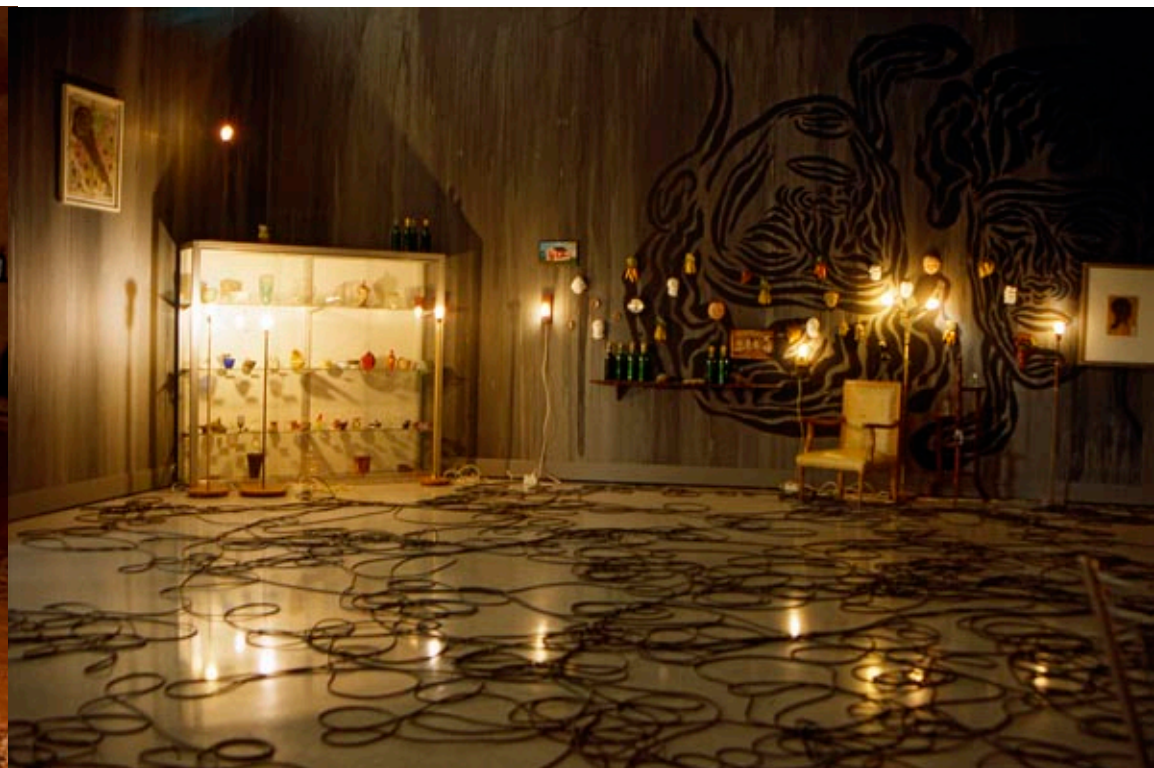
Showcases, 1992
 Showcases
 Maps and landscapes
 Lunds Konsthall, Lund, Sweden



Showcases, 1999
 Installation
 Oriel Gallery, Cardiff, Wales



Showcases, 1993
Installation
Kulturhuset, Stockholm, Sweden



The House of Memory, 1997
Installation
MEIAC, Badajoz, Spain

onlyyou, And There Was Nobody There, 2005
Show cases containing finger nail cuttings
Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago, Chile

Jet-lag Mambo, 2000
Installation
Henie Onstad Museum, Oslo, Norway



The Truth of the Walls

For Capelán, exhibiting the mechanics of the exhibition constitutes a political gesture that allows him to critically reflect on the system of art: its institutionality, its circuits, discourses and myths. He begins by reviewing the inscrip-tional structure of the work, the material support of the representation. The walls of the exhibition hall are not neutral; they are the parergon, the context of the work that intervenes in its display. Capelán continues to feel interpel-lated by the “historical truth” of the walls; for this reason he contemplates their imperfections, their angles and his own presence, subverting the exhibition’s codes and exceed-ing the virtual sector that, to a certain extent, frames tradi-tional vision. The same wall becomes the background of the painting or drawing; a background that does not acknowl-edge the conventional itinerary of the gaze and that forces it to circulate against the grain, to wander up and down, and hunt for signs of the ground.

On the other hand, the anamorphous drawings require brusque perspectives, inclinations and displacements con-strained by the fluctuation of the gaze. Lastly, Capelán commonly uses improper surfaces for plastic and graphic inscription: rocks, printed papers, leaves, roots, his own face, supports which have bulks and hollows which shatter the smooth surface of the plane and break up its homoge-neity. These operations allow us to understand each work as particular: each one depends strictly on the conditions of exhibition that refer to the outside of the scene. In each

of his shows, Capelán contemplates the conditions of the white cube: the place of representation is never sanitary, we find it contaminated by external vicissitudes, impinged by contingencies and accidentes that continually permeate and redraw the scenic circle and reverberate in its interior, inter-cepting the possibilities of a self-sufficient work of art.

At times this discussion requires drawing other, broader contours that contain (almost always) the first. The theater within the theater, the display case within the display case. The scenes from the series Maps and Landscapes (as with others) constitute not only the exhibition rooms of works of art (writings on the wall, framed paintings, objects dis-played on the floor, or on pedestals), but exhibited art; the installation signifies in itself an appeal to the gaze, a mise-en-scene of the very interpretive space, whose crowded nature acquires its own value of presence: those games of illumination, the painting on the wall (sometimes made of mud), the corners, the ceiling and floor, do not adhere submissively to the works they contain. Instead, they battle with them, vying over meaning and negotiating interven-ing space. For example, museum walls, painted entirely by hand, redirect the meanings of the exhibited works, inter-fering in them with strong connotations: the use of cheap labor referred to in Europe as “sudaca” (“southern shit”) work, the idea of the museum’s tactile appropriation, the sensual dressing of walls whose physical consistency is thus stressed etc.

Maps and Landscapes, 1992

Installation
Lunds Konsthall, Lund, Sweden

The Sleep of Reason, 1996

as in Five Gardens, Valfisken,
Simrishamn, Sweden





Map II, 2005

Paintings on walls, framed and taped drawings, bandana and dissected bird
onlyyou, A Certain Notion of Place,
Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales, Montevideo, Uruguay



Painting, 2005

Anamorphic figure on wall, painting on canvas and bottles
onlyyou, A Certain Notion of Place,
Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales, Montevideo, Uruguay

Corner piece, 2000

Jet-lag Mambo
Henie Onstad Museum,
Oslo, Norway

The art of painting after Sol Lewitt, 2000

Boxes and objects found in the museum's storage room, photos of the
process of transporting them to the exhibition room and wall painting,
Jet-lag Mambo-Henie Onstad Museum, Oslo, Norway

Corner piece, 2000

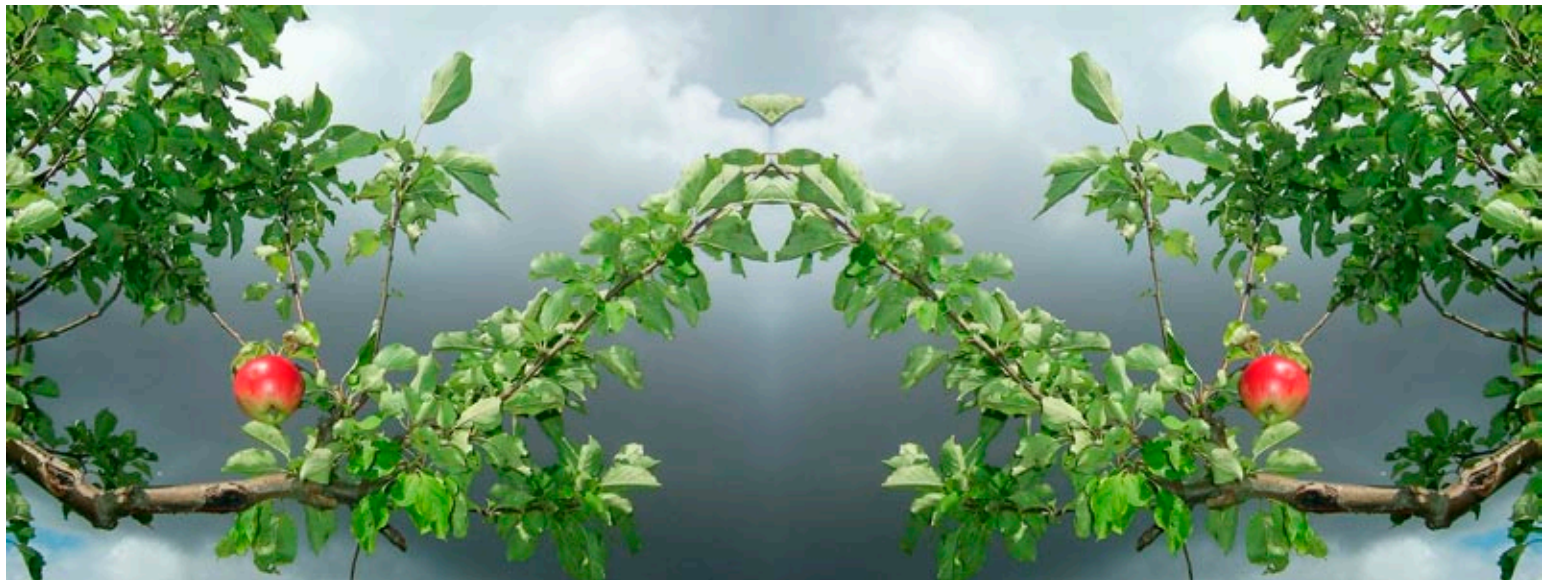
Jet-lag Mambo
Henie Onstad Museum,
Oslo, Norway

These Works of Art Are Not Works of Art

The series *Do the Natives Have Souls?* is based on thematically unclassifiable digital photographs. Assuming the figurative technique of Rorschach's test, each image is laid out as a unity constructed from internal splitting and reflection, the game of identity and difference. The virtual axis that divides, symmetrically, the photos and permits the inverted duplication of its parts means that it is not possible to determine which is the original image and which its copy, which the front, and which the back. This meaningful suspense reinforces the meaning of the title that perhaps constitutes the scaffolding for the piece: the colonial discussion concerning the very humanity of indigenous peoples. To install so inhumane (and so soul-less) a question on a formally beautiful image, one that is centered and exact although ambiguous in its truths, constitutes an incisive

irony regarding systems of art. On the one hand, beauty as the coronation of the completed form, as harmonic synthesis that leaves no trace and generates satisfaction. On the other hand, the insolence of a question marked by a savage past: a history that cannot be forgotten because it continues to have consequences, further producing discrimination, misery, and insult.

It is not by coincidence that this series constitutes an homage to Magritte, depraved specialist in the theater of representation. It becomes impossible to define an artistic operation, but among the infinite attempts to do so we could say that art means putting a sign of interrogation on things: instilling suspicion as to the transparency of the signs that name things.





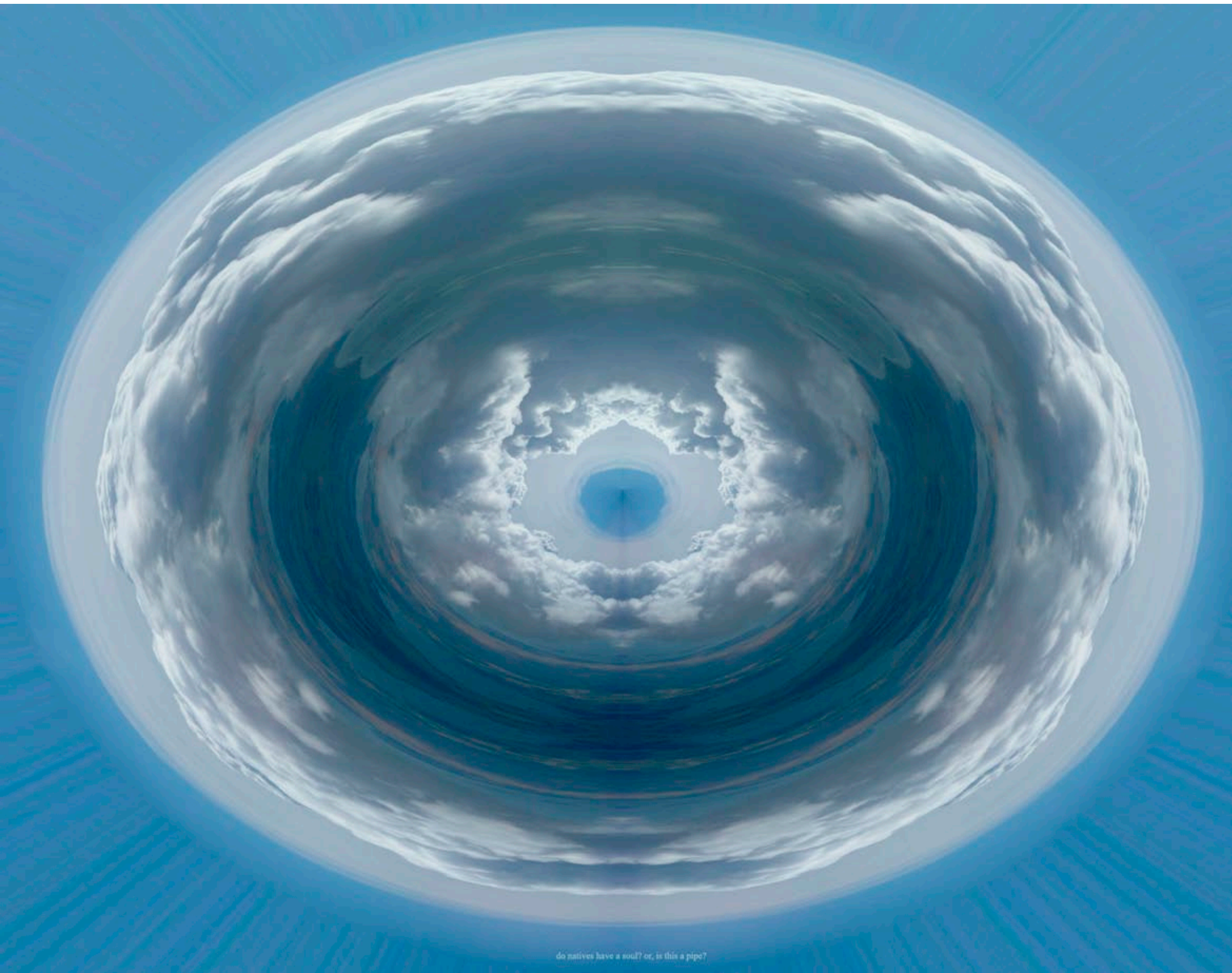
FU
O

CK
FF

From the serie Do the natives have a soul?, 2004
Digital photography



Do the natives have a soul? or, is this
a pipe?, from the serie Do the natives
have a soul?, 2004
Digital photography



do natives have a soul? or, is this a pipe?



EVERYTHING GOOD FOR ME IS GOOD IN GENERAL



This is not made in China, from the serie
Do the natives have a soul?, 2004
Digital photography

Now then, a radical work of art always seeks to bind this suspicion with that impossibility of defining art itself. That is to say, the same concept of art is labeled with an unsolvable question that prevents its closure. Or with contradictory answers that subject the concept to the paradox. The work exhibited in the National Museum of Montevideo (2005) includes, among other works, some parrots who, positioned in individual cages, insistently repeat the phrase, I am art, while others repeat, I am not art. Some birds better succeed in repeating this phrase than others, but in general, the message that is transmitted is, obviously, vacillating and confusing.

The readings this piece opens up are varied and, for the most part, concerned with the limits of language and the fate of the museum as an institution, but the very existence of broken record is uncomfortable: it alludes to the repetitive chatter of certain discourses about art, it fosters distrust as to the status of the work of art itself (what is art?, what is it not?) and it problematizes the validity of resources that prove to be, once again, politically incorrect (such as the use of live animals).

**onlyyou, A Certain Notion
of Place, 2005**

Six caged parrots
Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales, Montevideo, Uruguay
(The parrots “worked” indoors no more than four hours a day and spent the the rest of the daytime outdoors. They were not an endangered species. After the show they were set free).





The only piece Capelán has created under the name video is not undertaken with a camera. The series “This is not a video” (“Ceci n’est pas un video”) puts in question the normative discourse surrounding artistic genres, dismantling classifications based on the fetishization of technical processes. The work consists of 48 highly aesthetic, semantically neutral digital images (representing skies, airports, and quotidian places), positioned, yet again, according to the iconography of Rorschach’s test and subtitled with pieces of text referring to the content of the work. In This is not a video, the movement is not produced by the photographic work of the camera, but rather by the displacement of the spectator who traverses the exhibition.

This operation allows the artist to make an ironic commentary on the loss of the notion of the “image in motion” that characterizes video. This is so because today, by and large, videos, while continually vindicating the purity of that which they name, are increasingly produced by means of animated computer programs: the camera creates a filmic spray to be digitally edited later, without real successive movements. More than denouncing the supposed adulterations of a technical process (that of video in this case),

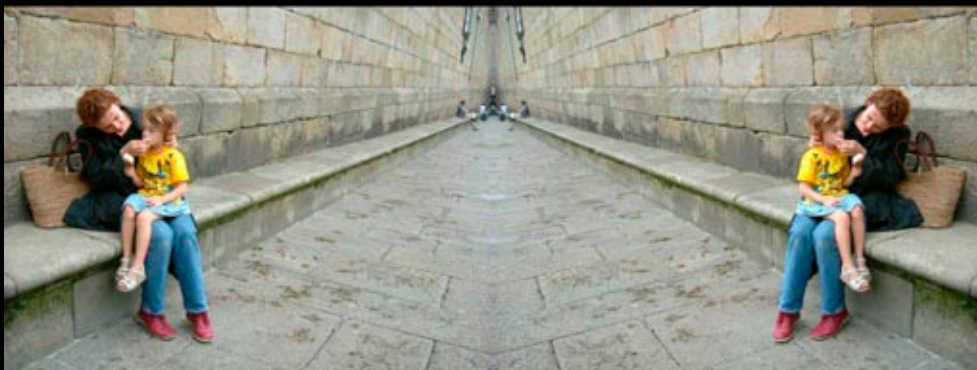
Capelán seeks to prove the contingency of aesthetic categories: it does not matter if a work of art is or is not a video, but rather whether or not it proves capable of mobilizing meaning. On the other hand, the wink to Magritte obliges us to once again frame the question within the context of the slippage of the image and the misunderstanding of the representation: they do not disavow the truth of the work, but by displacing it and confusing it with its own shadows, they oblige us to look for it, again and again, elsewhere.



Content arises from participation in a specific iconographic tradition



do you love me?



natural emergence



Content arises from the genre or medium of the art work



fuck off!



dematerialazation

Ceci n'est pas un video, 2004
48 digital images in four frames

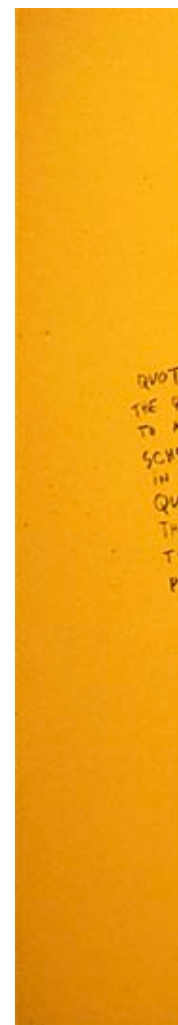
Schopenhauer's, *The World as Will and Representation*, asks if human reality could be given adequate meaning by images and concepts. Capelán works off this premise by questioning, once again, the possibilities of the language of art in venturing beyond the realm of the representable. In *Jet-lag Mambo* (2000), Capelán presents a painting surrounded by quotes and comments written on the wall and referring to the text of this German philosopher. The painting, made from dirt, fruit juice, and breast milk (that of his wife, collected while she was breast feeding) is found in a constant process, the consistency of the image depending on the action of heat that, upon bleaching the organic dyes, produces rust. The same materials have strong signifying marks: breast milk, for example opens an intense and vast spectrum of associations. Without denying other resonances, I am interested in underlying aspects within the effects of this text linked to the problem of representation: of that which exists and is not shown in full, of that which appears and ebbs away, of the invisible that, as Wittgenstein would have it, should be shown.

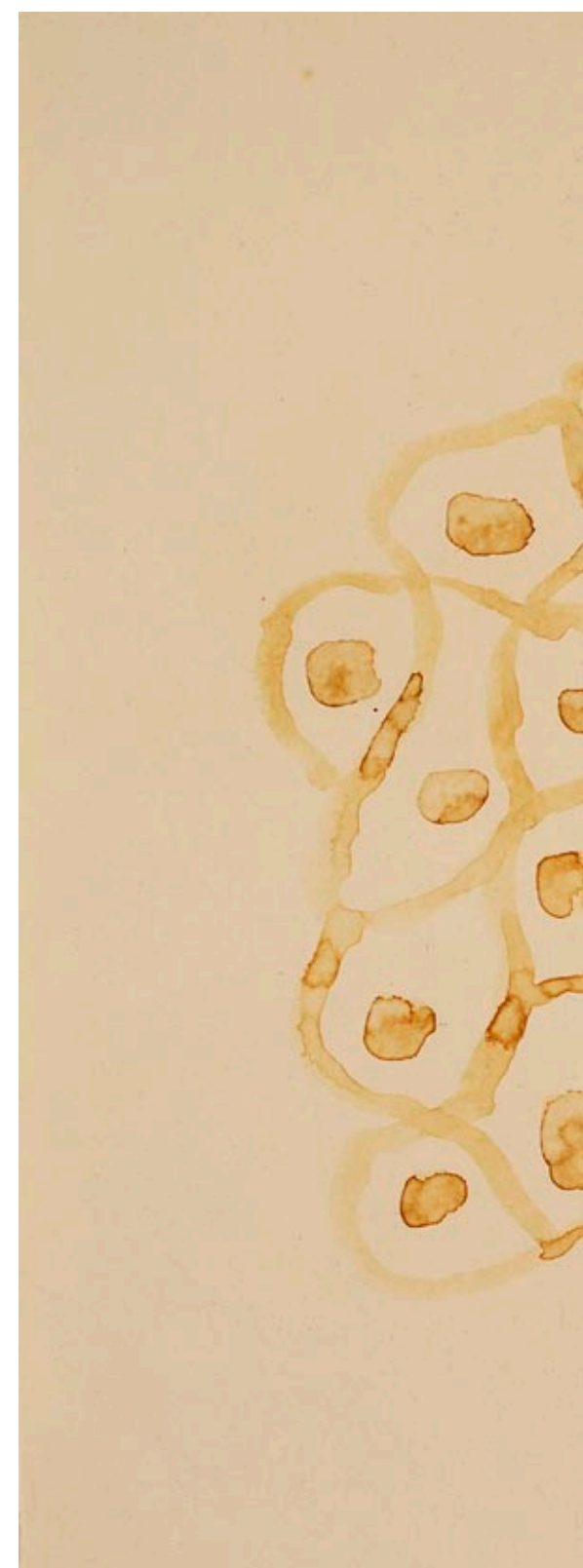
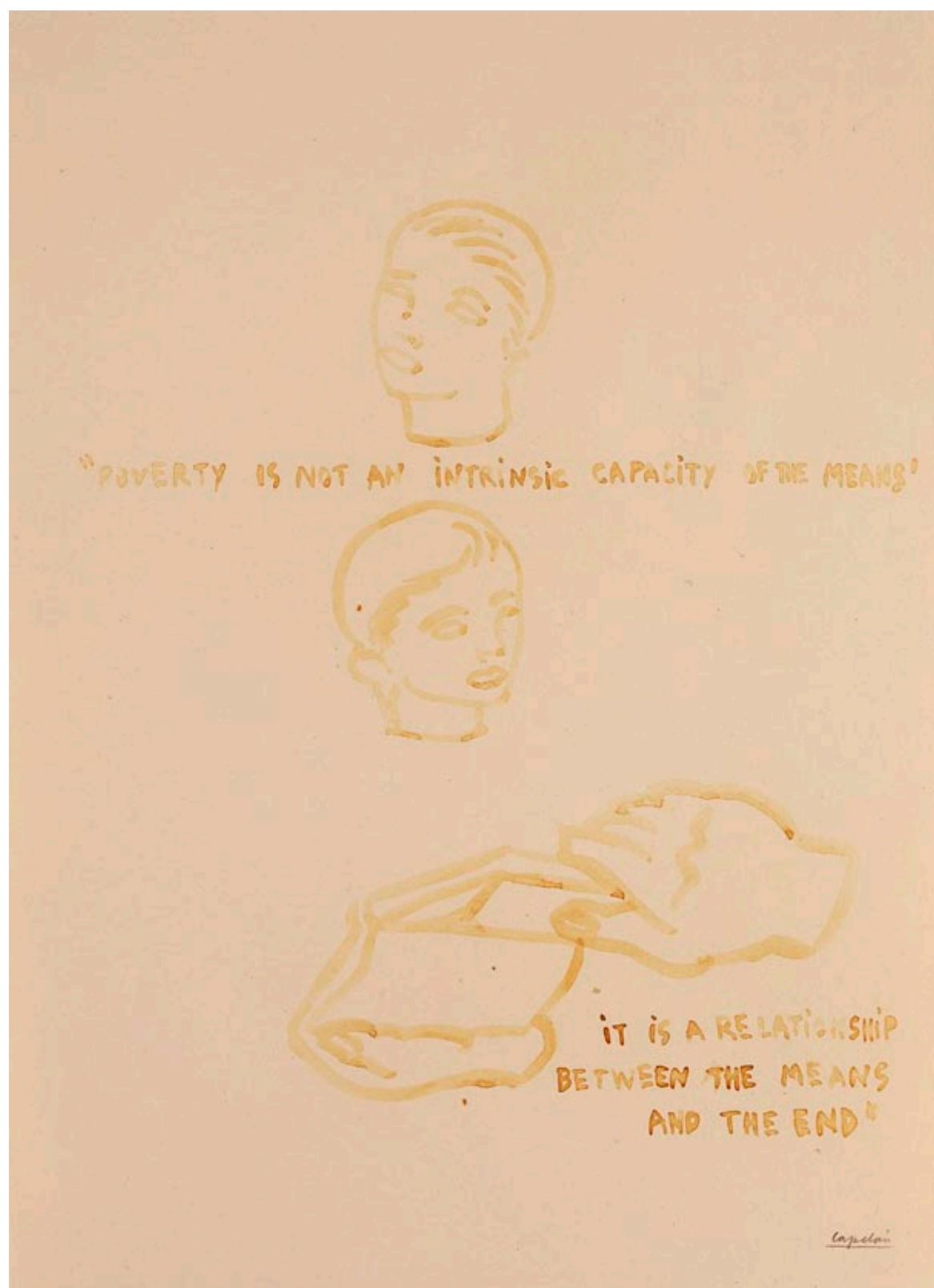
It is these materials themselves that initiate the game of presence and subtraction: when the organic dyes of the painting recede, all that is left are the faded, rusted traces. The vestiges have an oscillating and spectral status: they

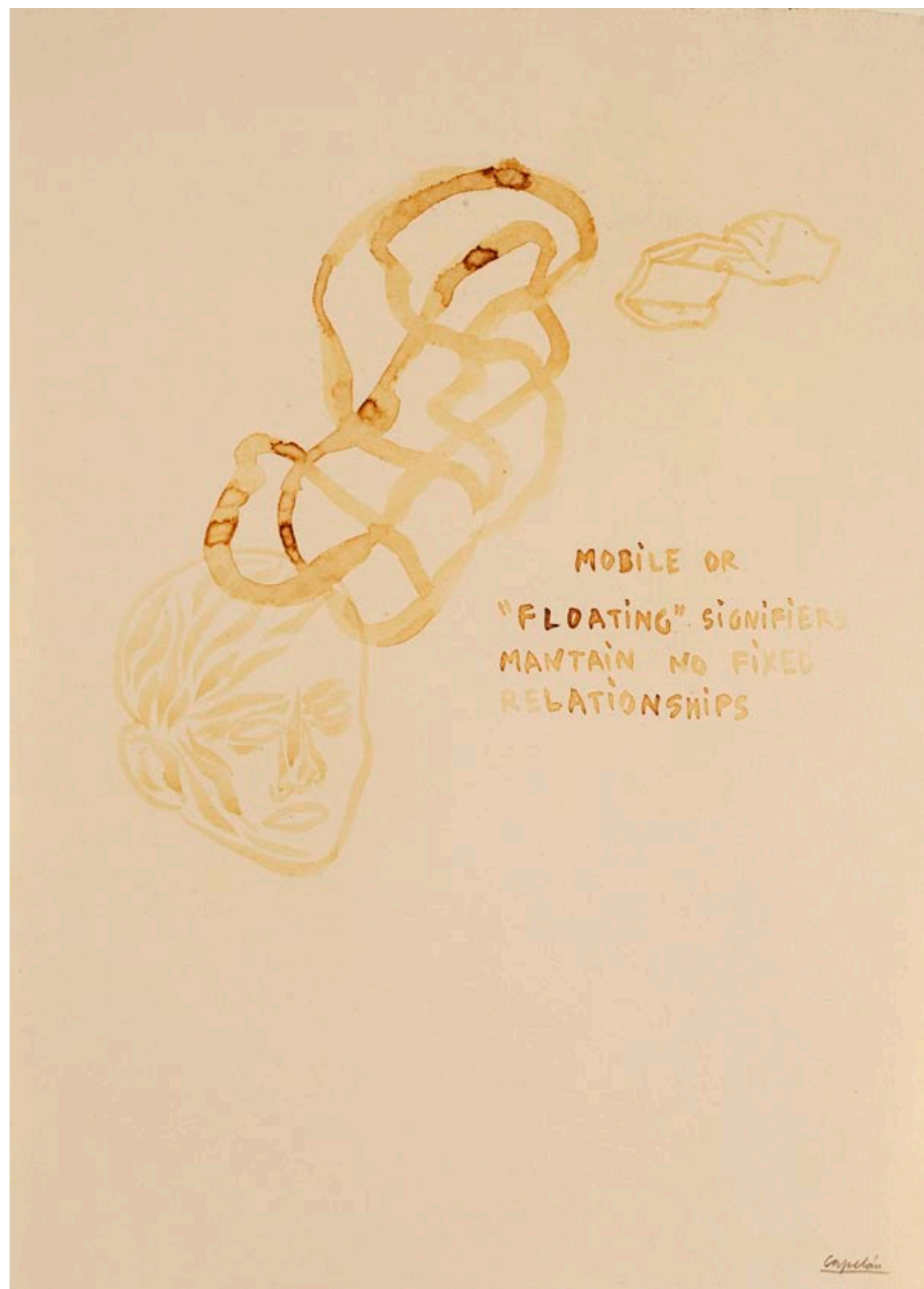
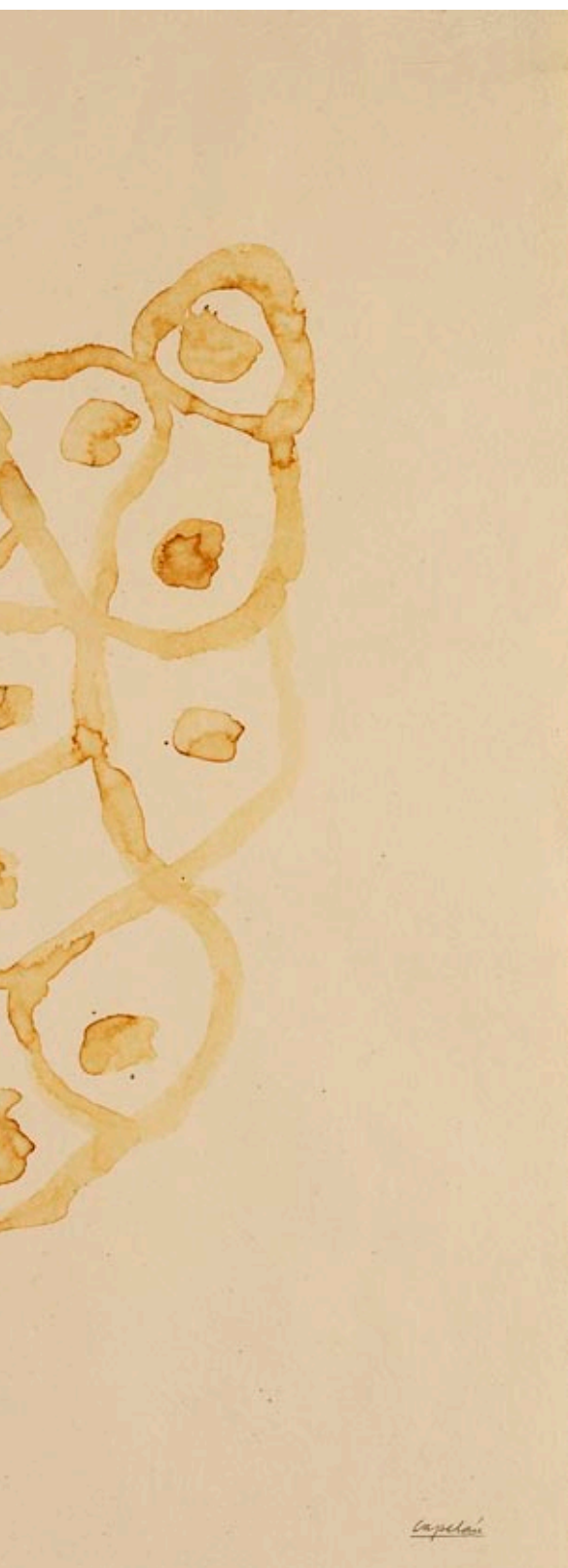
are signs of things but also part of them. The veiled traces that point to milk are not only images of it, but real milk that produces its own self-representation in the theater of the scene. And, in the process of doing so, becomes its own sign, even while furtively conserving its own entity (it impregnates the medium, injecting itself into its thin body, dying it from within; producing, perhaps, a dry stain on the other side). This indeterminate character, between its real presence and its mere appearance, between its outline and its evaporation, situates it halfway between the sign and the thing. And this demands the irruption of other meanings.

During the dictatorship, clandestine communication between militants required invisible writings: they employed dyes made from lemon juice or diluted starch so that the message in white could only be revealed through the use of heat or an iodine solution. Once again the illegible and its diverted codes. The true content of a representation is a representation, a manifestation and avoidance of the gaze. This is why Derrida says that "The illegible is not the opposite of the legible; it is the space that provides the occasion or the force to return to the beginning"¹⁵ Capelán would say that the illegible is a hook: a ruse to trick the fixity of the legible and track the meanings written in white, between the lines, or on the other side.

¹⁵ Here I refer only to a single line of connotations but it is evident that the reference to the image of the psychodiagnostic text mobilizes another register of meaning, linked to the representation of the subject.







Drawings, 1997

Mother's milk on paper, 75 x 40 cm
Private collection

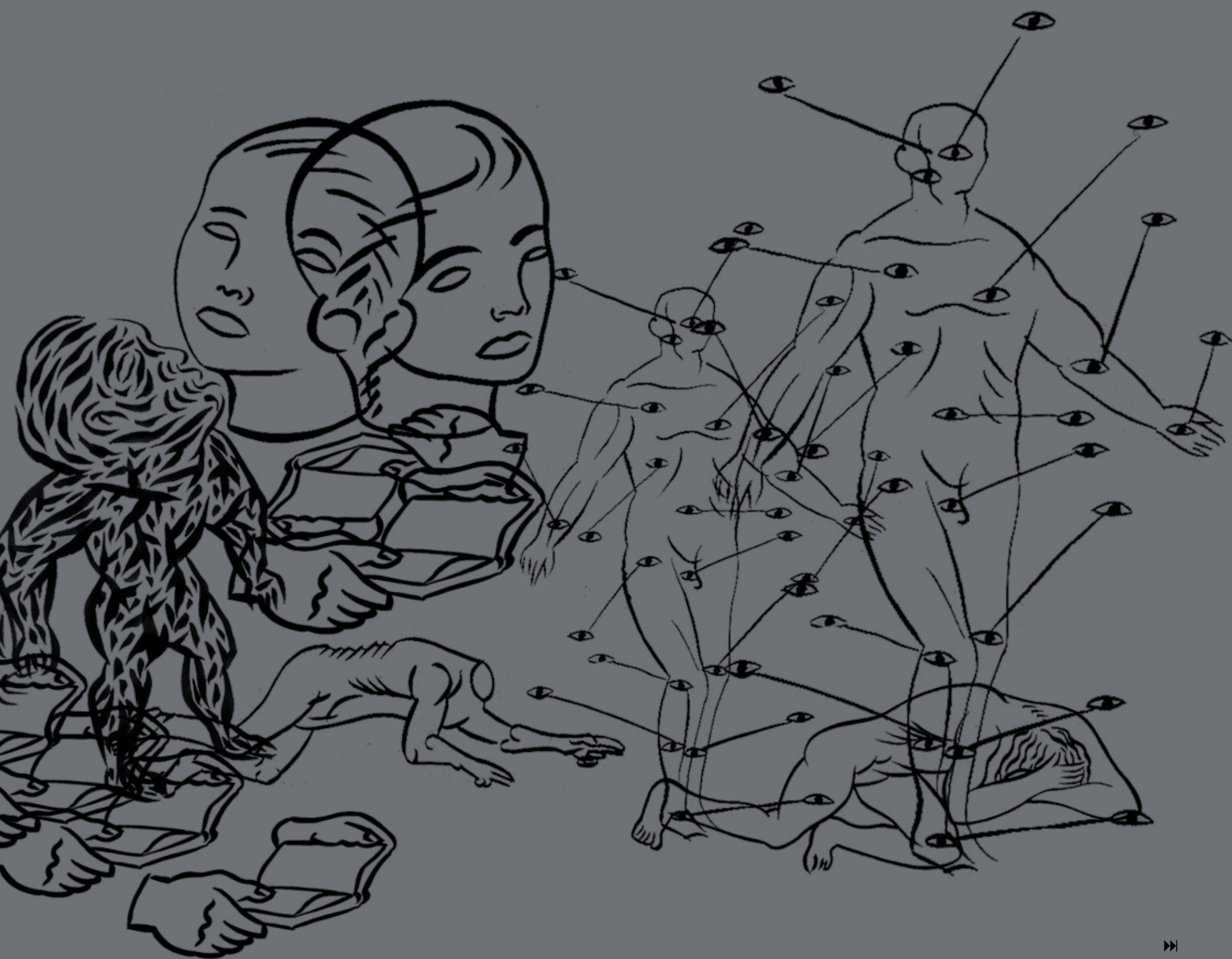
Facing the illegible, on the brink of representation's failure, art does not resign itself to ingeniously employing the fort/da pendulum of the gaze, as if it were playing in the dark in a room of mirrors: in the frustration of full presence (and of the pure gaze), it seeks the occasion or strength to begin anew the search for signification. Or, what is more or less the same, to open up a space for the question. Amongst other definitions given to the term "hook," Capelán refers to this strategy as "hurling a stone in the air and waiting for something to happen."

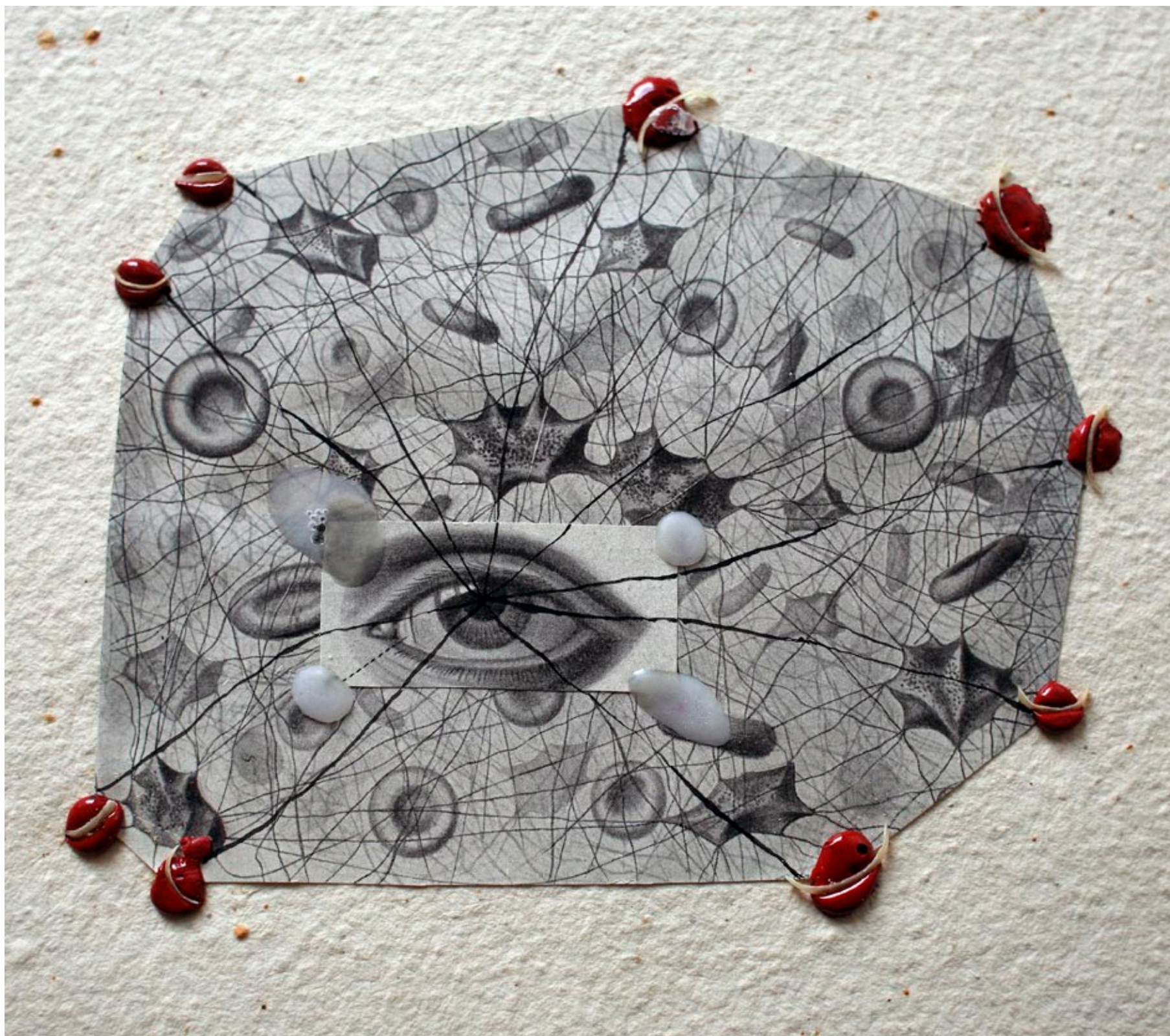
As such, the artist's attempt to control the entire process of signification within the work of art is challenged; the intention that his/her message will dodge interferences and noises, to arrive intact at its receptor. Because of this, Capelán invents conditions so that something takes place: he opens a scene of anticipation. Heidegger refers to this opening as *Lichtung*: the clearing left by the work of art in order to await the event. In the midst of cramped dwellings, of overwritten pages, of images stacked upon each other, Capelán introduces a sharp break or decoy that unhinges the stage and fleetingly cracks it open to imminence.

Ticio Escobar
Asunción, May 2008

Translation: Michele Campos Johnson & Jane Griffin







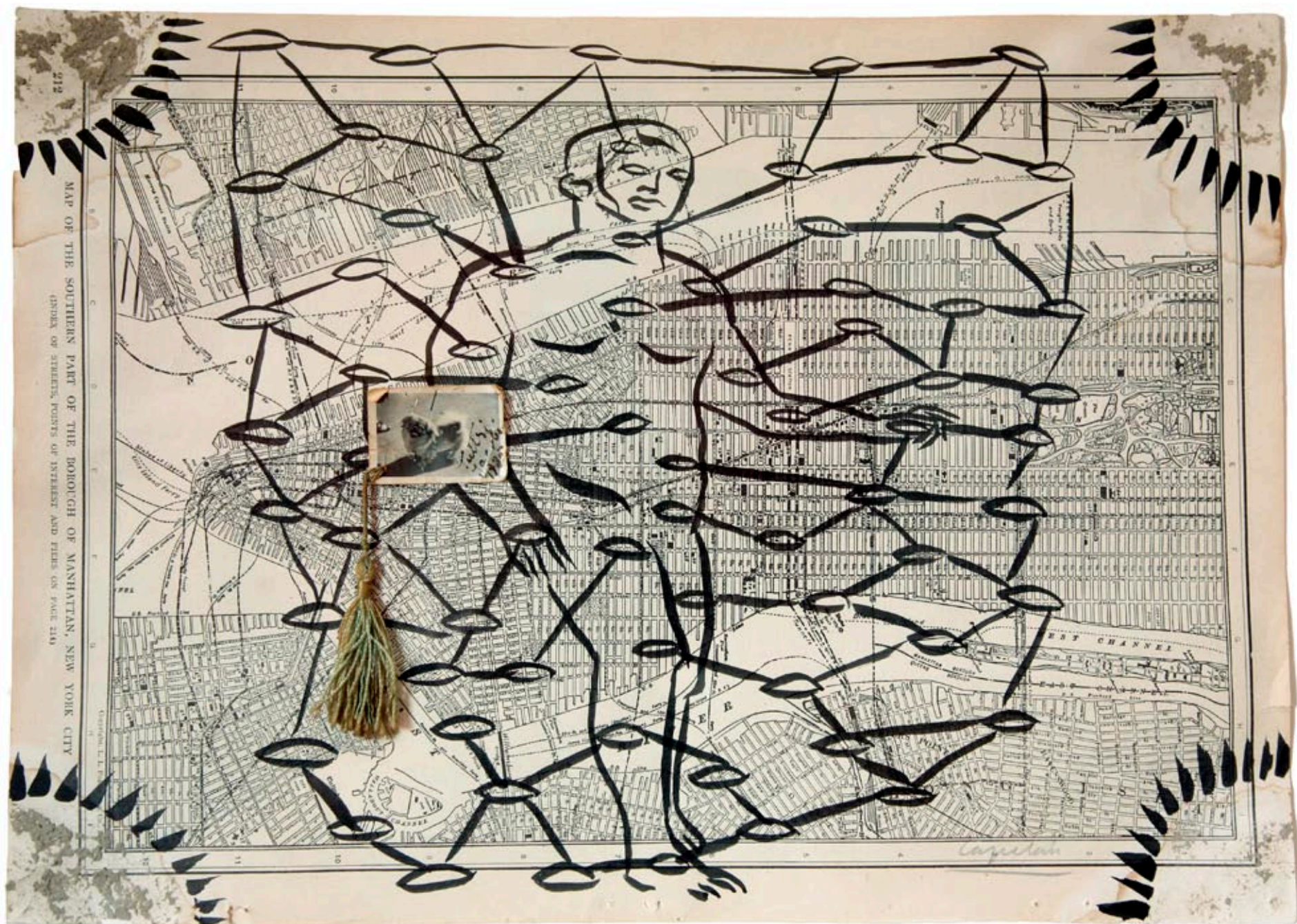
Collage, 1987

Sealing wax, ink, finger nail cuttings and
book cuttings on paper. Detail, 50 x 38 cm
Jean Sellem Collection, Lund, Sweden

Drawing, 1987

Sealing wax, ink, wax, finger nail cuttings and
book cuttings on paper. Detail, 50 x 38 cm
Jean Sellem Collection, Lund, Sweden





Drawing, 1990

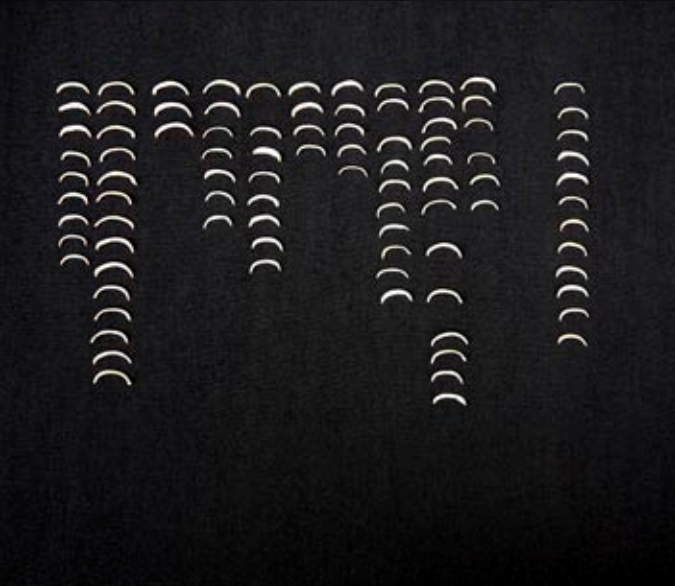
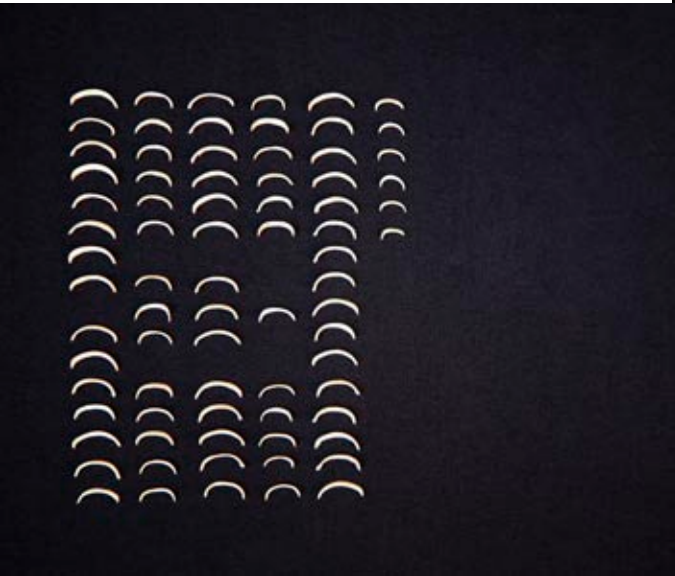
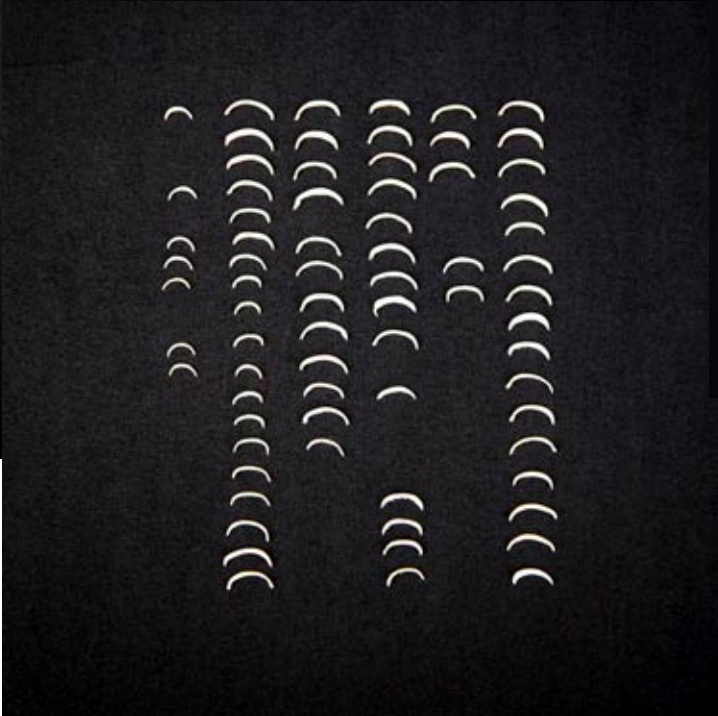
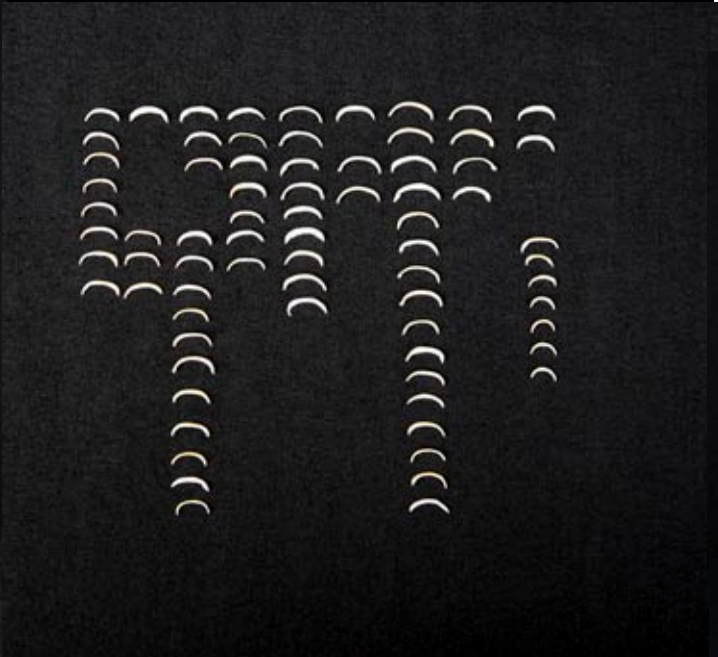
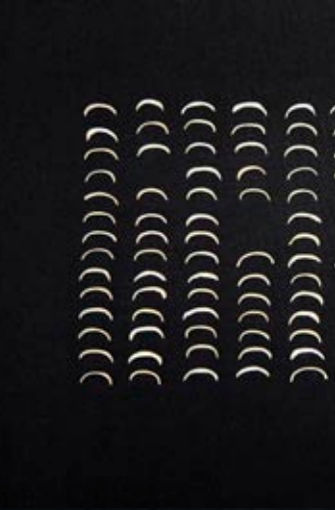
Indian ink and photography on map, 14 x 20 cm
Ulla and Greger Olsson Art Collection, Sweden

Drawing, 1992

Soil, Indian ink and object on paper, 50 x 40 cm
Guillermo Conte Collection, San José, Costa Rica

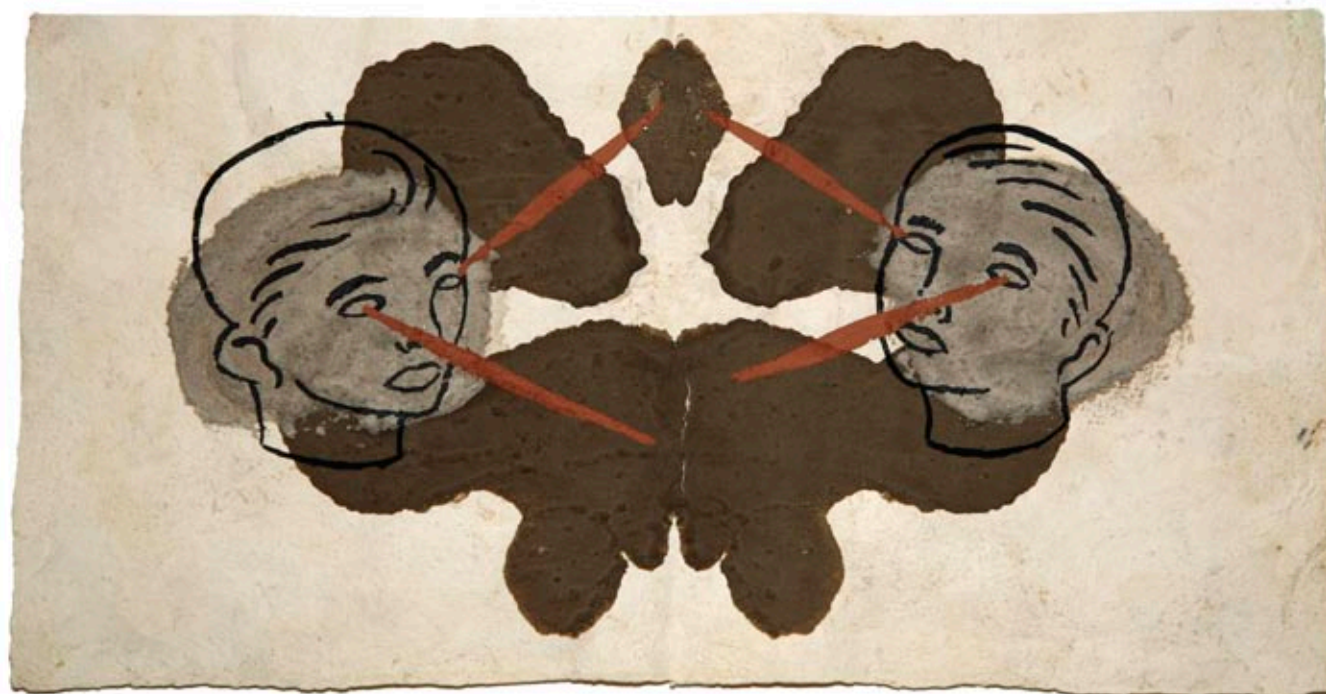


Capelin





Finger nail cuttings, 1990...2008



Painting, 1992

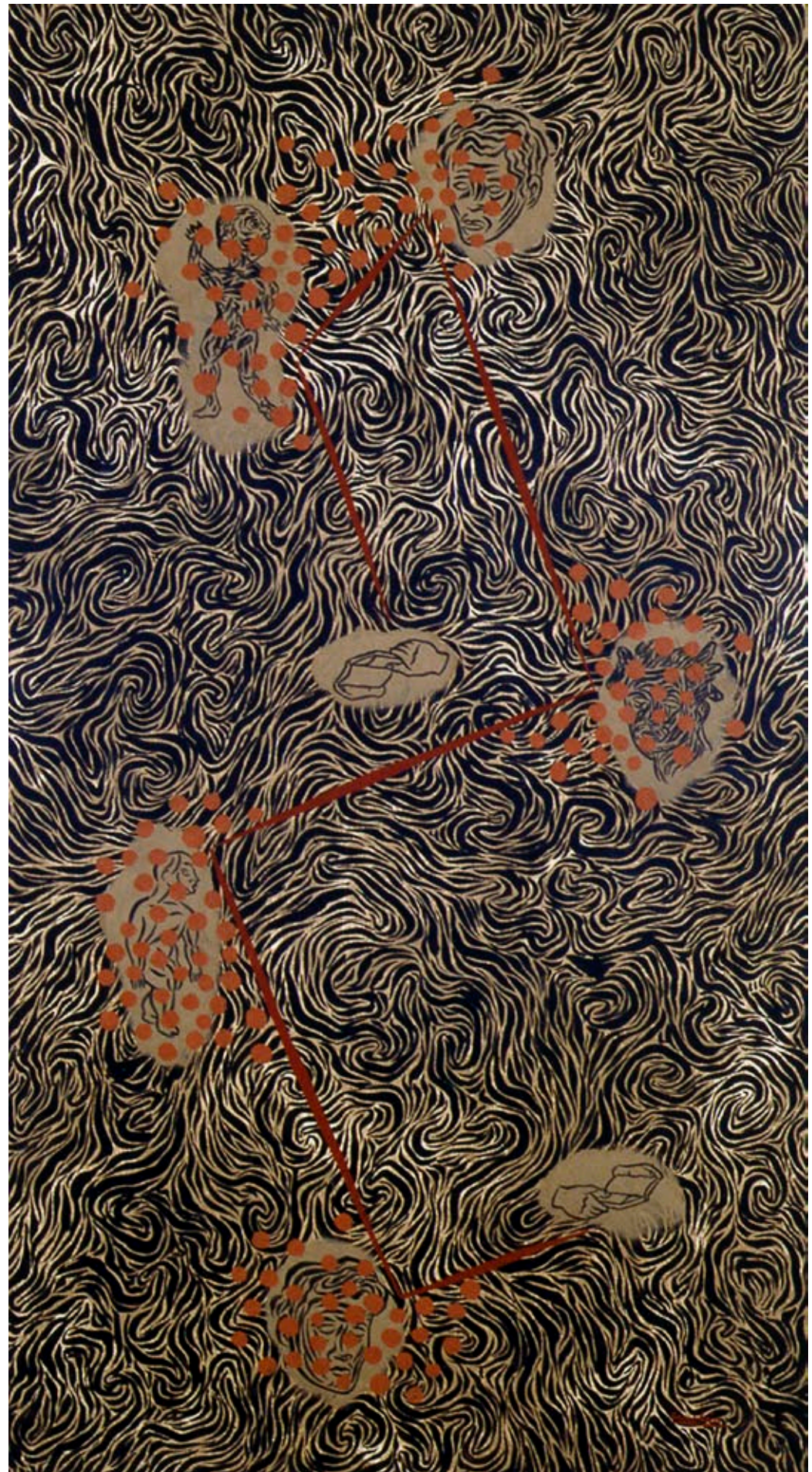
Soil, ashes and Indian ink on paper, 29,5 x 39 cm

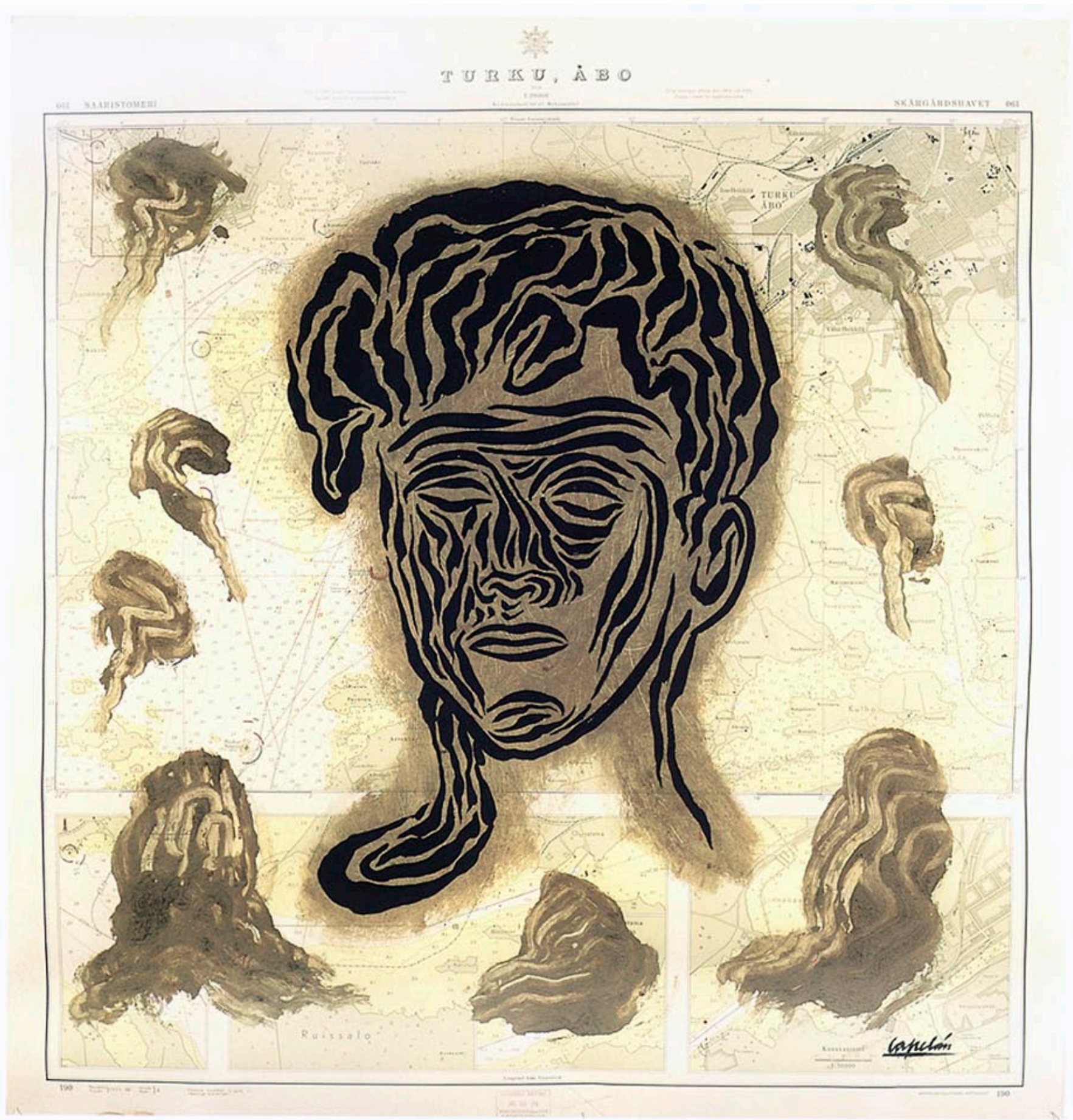
Painting, 1992

Soil, ashes, red ocher and Indian ink on paper, 20 x 39 cm

Painting, 1994

Soil, Indian ink and red ocher on canvas, 143 x 77 cm
Private collection, Bogotá, Colombia







Painting, 1992
Soil and Indian ink on map, 77 x 81 cm
Private collection, Turku, Finland

Painting, 1992
Soil, red ocher, ashes and Indian ink on paper, 64 x 74 cm
Private collection, Malmö, Sweden

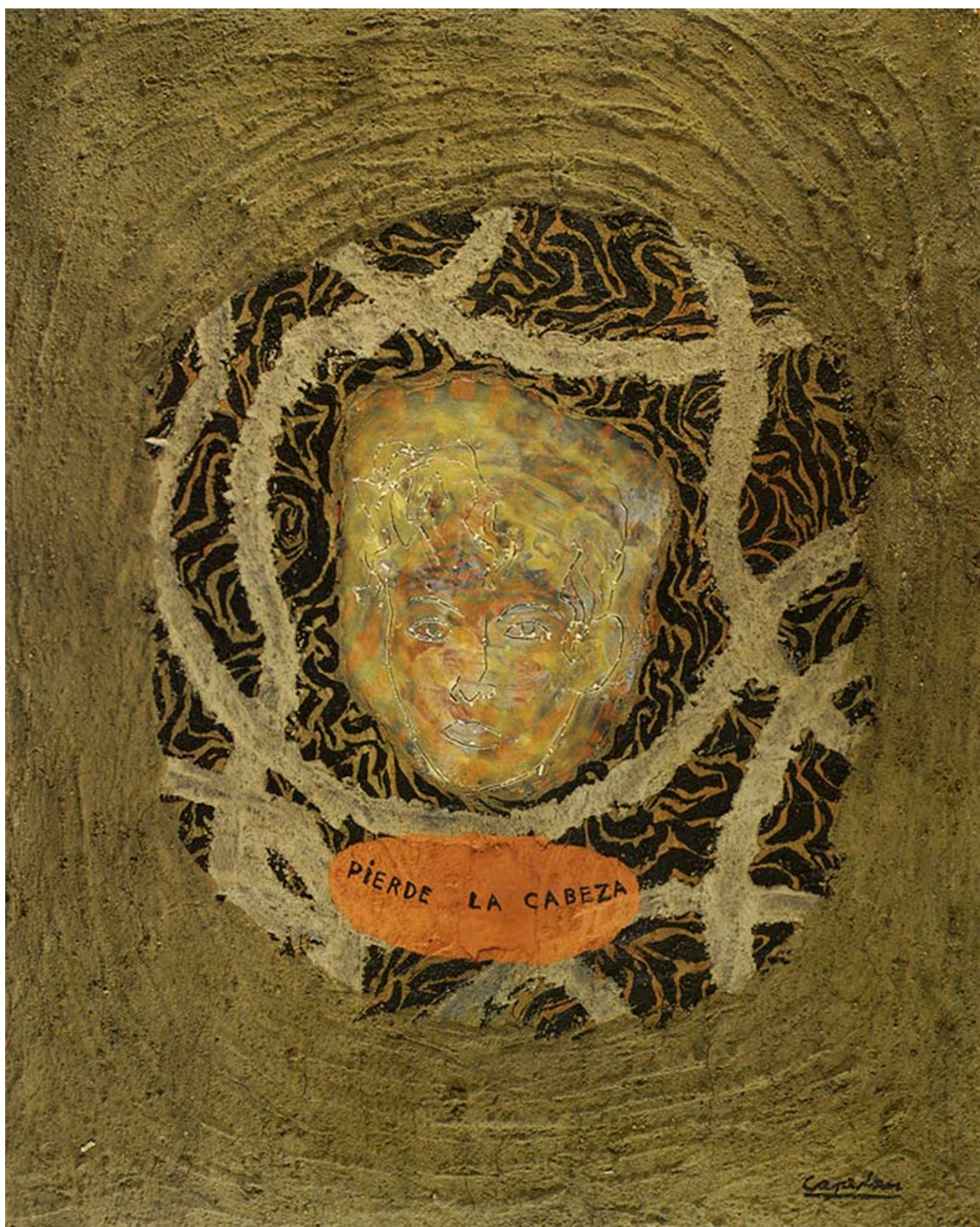


Painting, 1992

Soil, red ocher and Indian ink on
paper, 160 x 110 cm
Private collection, Malmö, Sweden

Painting, 1992

Soil, red ocher, ashes, bee wax and
Indian ink on paper, 40 x 50 cm
Private collection, Malmö, Sweden







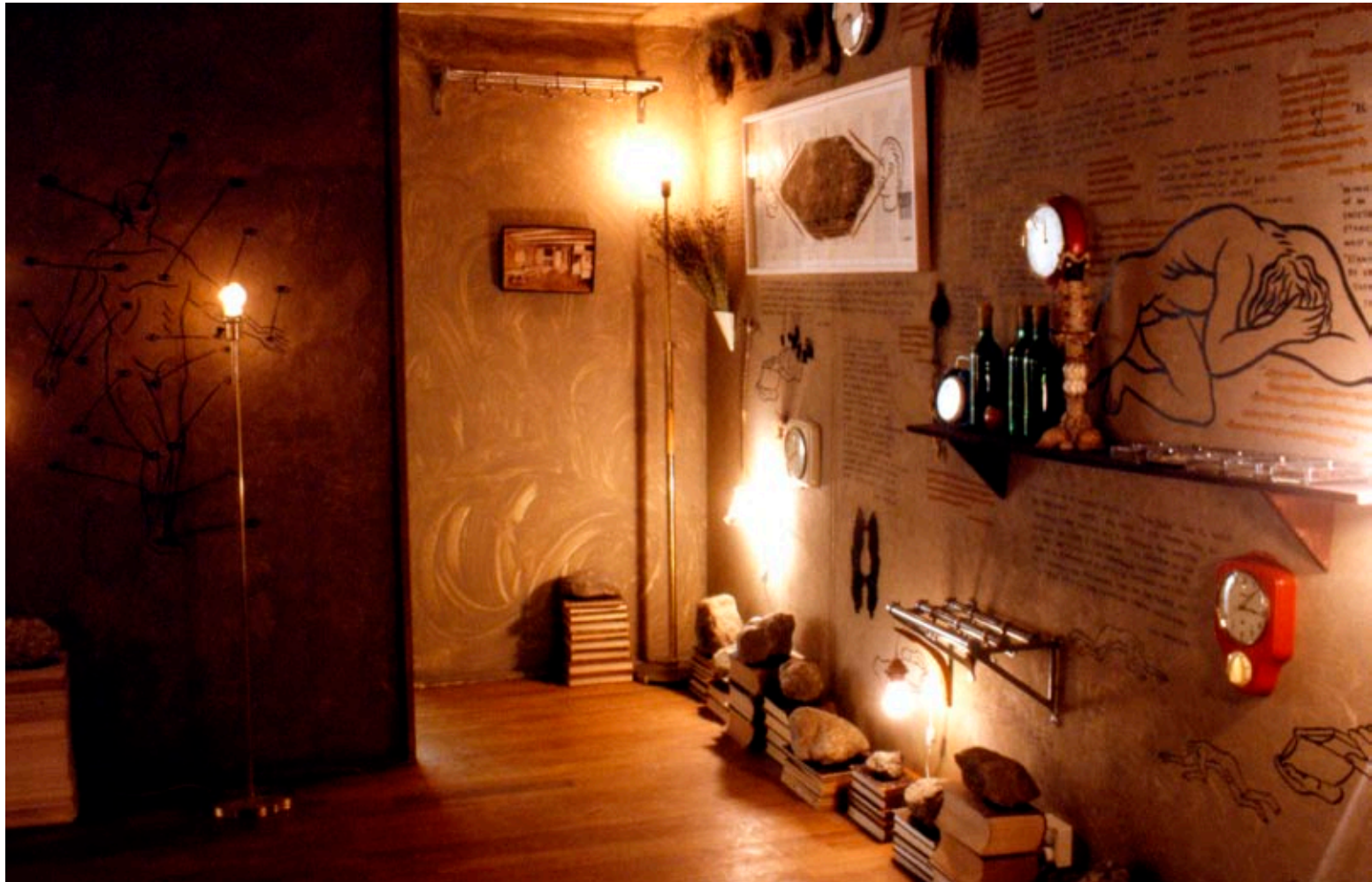
Painting, 1994

Soil, red ocher and Indian ink on
canvas, 160 x 130 cm
Private collection, Bogotá, Colombia

Painting, 1993

Indian ink and red ocher on photography
of gens, 26 x 18 cm
Private collection, Lund, Sweden





Installation, 1994
Galeria Angel Romero, Madrid, Spain

Installation, 1993
Kulturhuset, Stockholm, Sweden



Painting, 1994

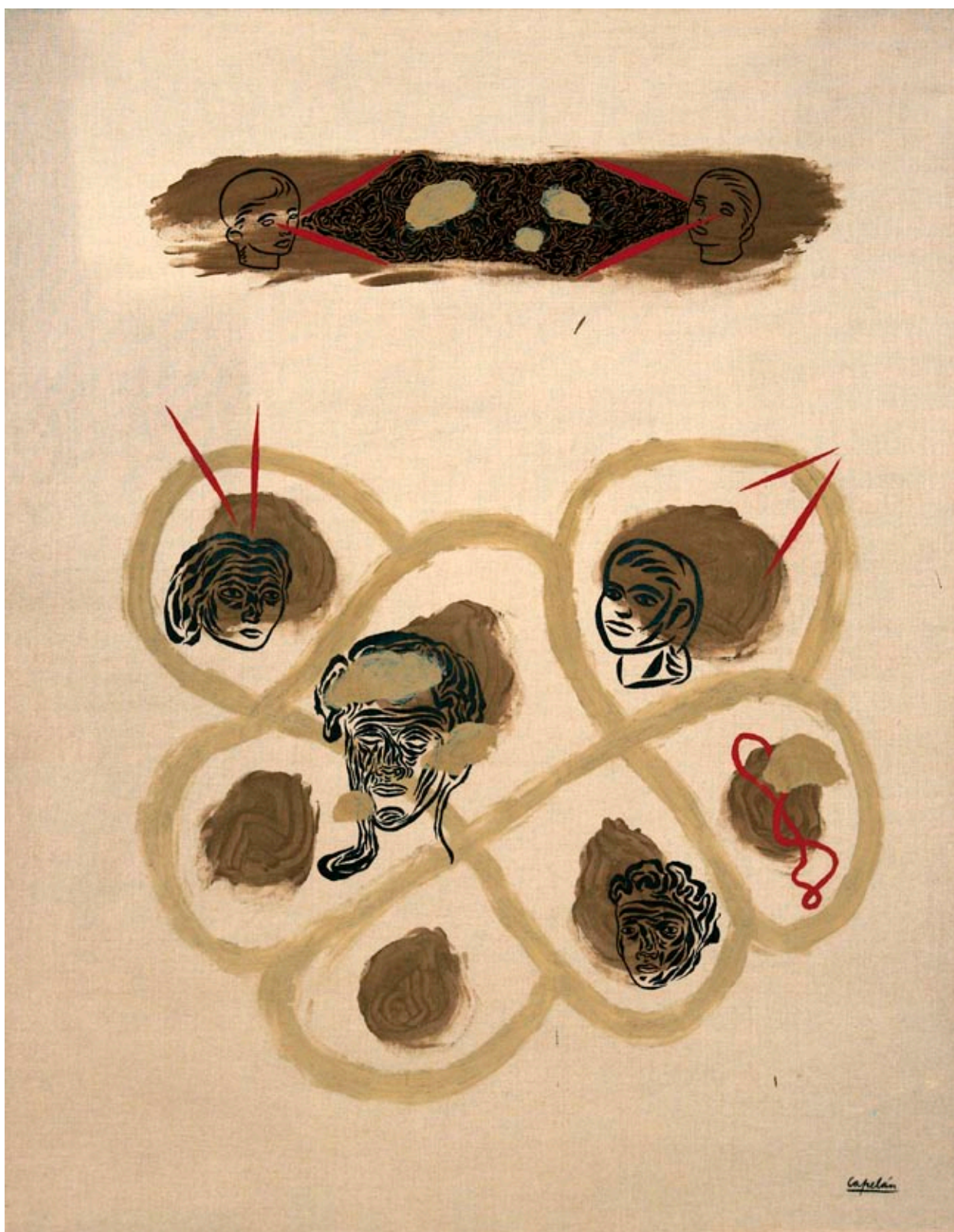
Soil, Indian ink and red ocher
on canvas, 160 x 130 cm
Private collection, Colombia

Installation, 1994

Galeria Angel Romero,
Madrid, Spain







Painting, 1992

Soil and Indian ink on map, 76 x 111 cm
Private collection, Sweden

Painting, 1994

Soil, red ochre and Indian ink on canvas, 168 x 131 cm
Daniel Yankelwitz Collection, San José, Costa Rica



**Stepping Out of the White Cube / A
little song for Johannesburg, 1995**
Installation
In Africus, Johannesburg 1st Biennial,
Johannesburg, South Africa





Window #2: My home is your home, 1995

Installation, little house built in the gardens of UN's high quarters
In Dialogues of Peace, United Nations Jubileum,
Geneva, Switzerland





The living room, 1996
 Installation
 in Inclusion/Exclusion, Steirischer
 Herbst 96, Graz, Austria





Painting, 1996

Indian ink and earth pigments
on canvas, 95 x 132 cm
Ulla and Greger Olsson
Art Collection, Sweden.

Painting, 1996

Indian ink and earth pigments
on canvas, 183 x 136 cm
Ulla and Greger Olsson
Art Collection, Sweden

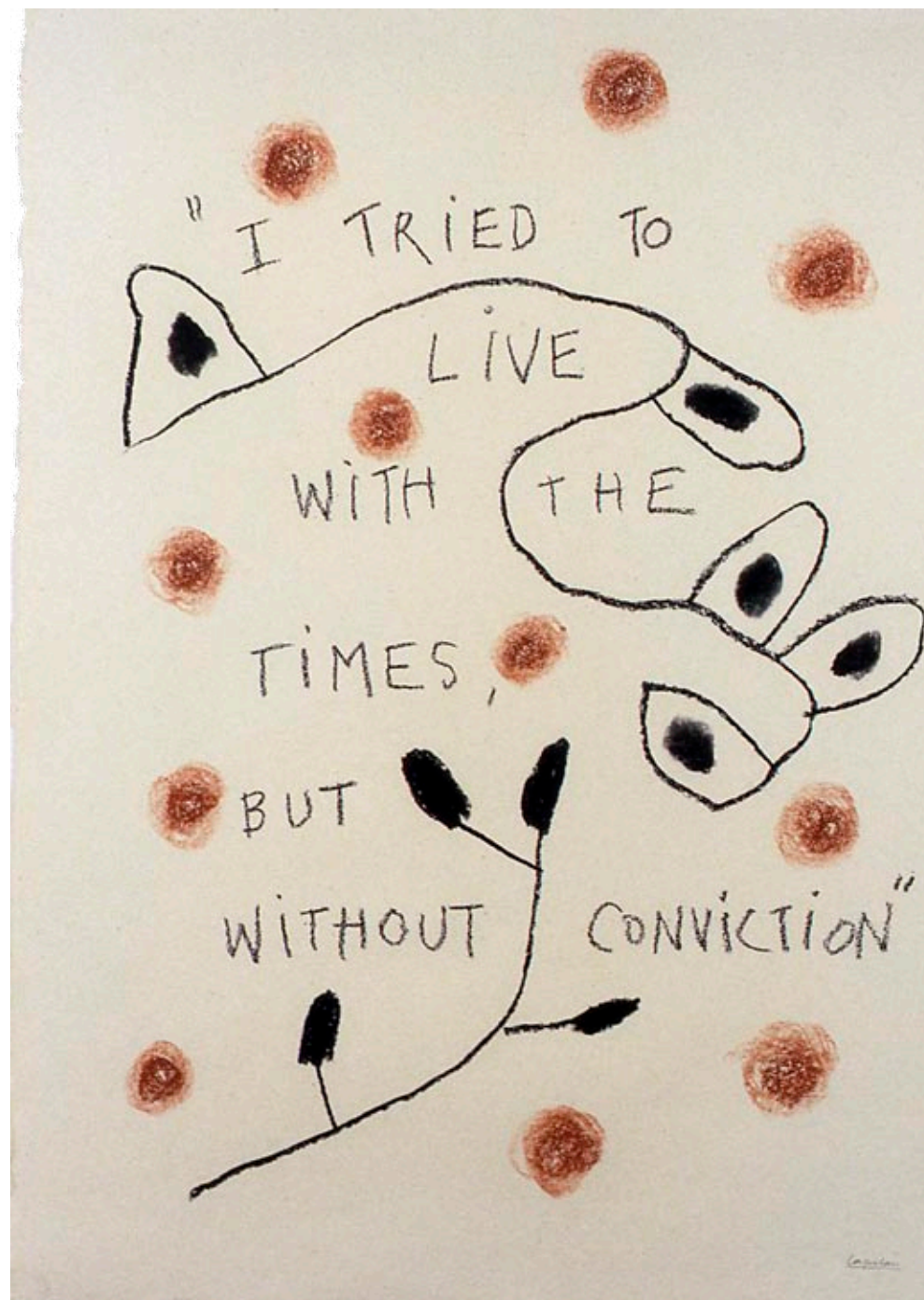






Painting, 1996
 Acrylic and Indian ink on
 canvas, 165 x 140 cm
 Daniel Yankelewitz Collection,
 San José, Costa Rica

Painting, 1996
 Painting and painted wall
 in Aura, On Time
 Moderna Muséet, Stockholm,
 Sweden



Drawing, 1996
 Charcoal and sanguina on
 paper, 50 x 40 cm
 Private Collection, Sweden

Painting, 1996
 Earth pigments and Indian ink on
 canvas, 168 x 84 cm,
 Daniel Yankelwitz Art Collec-
 tion, San José, Costa Rica







Exhibition room #7, 1996

Installation, walls painted with red paint and soil, framed paintings by the father of the artist, microphones, speakers, chairs, cable and tool box
In Interzones, Uppsala Konstmuseum
Uppsala, Sweden

Painting, 1996
Pigments and Indian ink on canvas,
134 x 95 cm
Ulla and Greger
Olsson Art Collec-
tion, Sweden



Capitain



Painting, 1996
Pigments and Indian ink on canvas,
86 x 65 cm
Ulla and Greger
Olsson Art Collection, Sweden





The Sleep of Reason, 1996

Supermarket counter, microphones and speakers
In Five Gardens, Valfisken, Simrishamn, Sweden



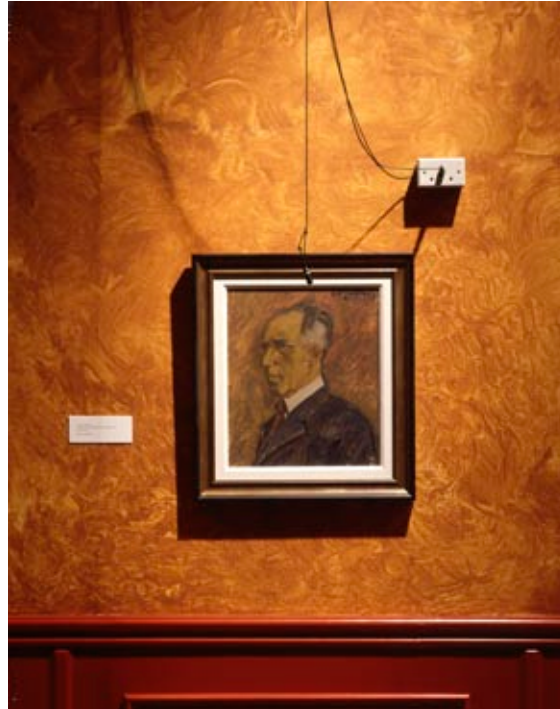
The Sleep of Reason, 1996

Installation, mattress, framed pictures, 10,000 meters of cable, lamps, books, stones, graffiti and radio
In Five Gardens, Valfisken, Simrishamn, Sweden

Painting, 1996

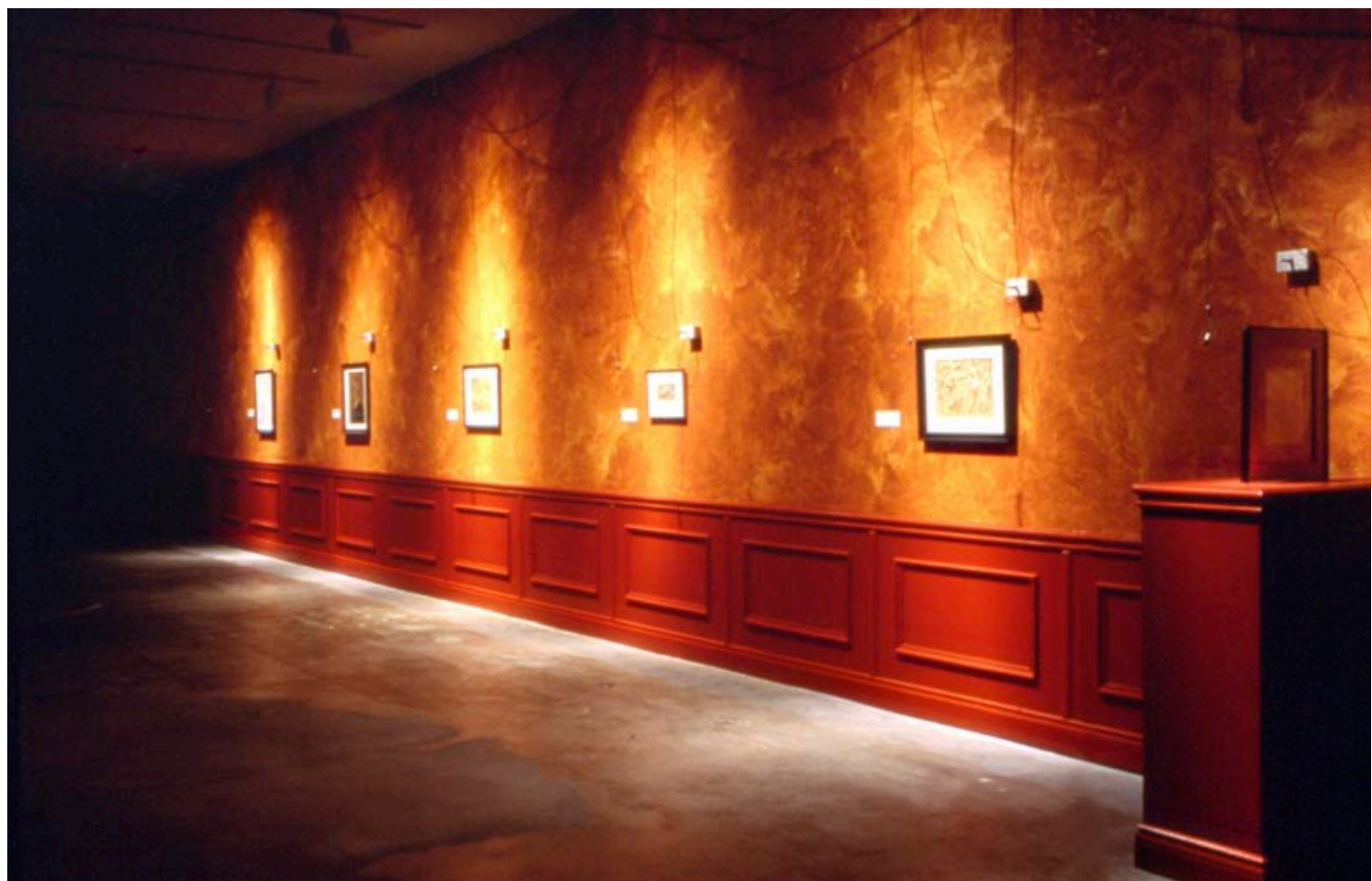
Pigments and Indian ink on canvas, 183 x 136 cm
Ulla and Greger Olsson Art Collection, Sweden



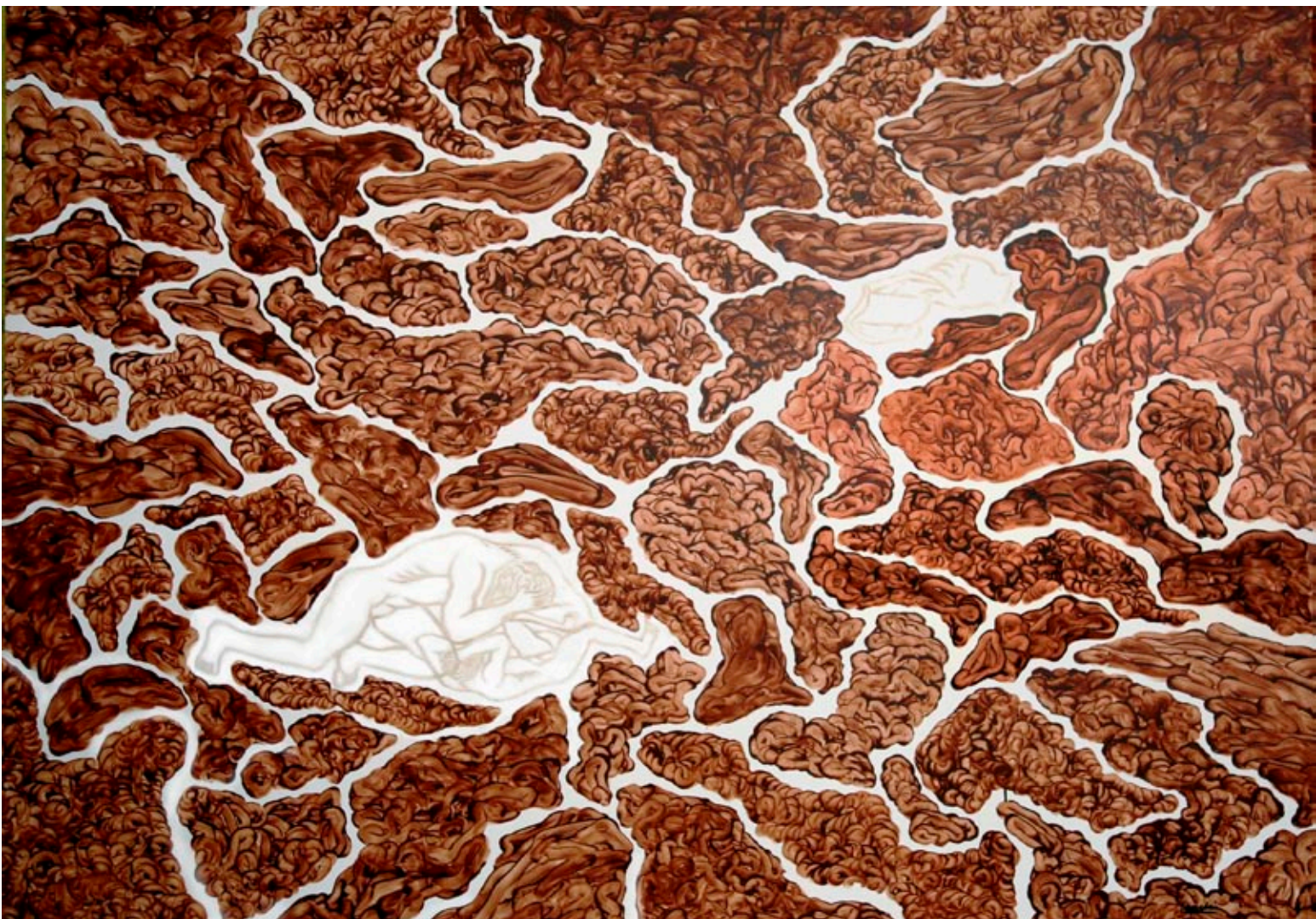


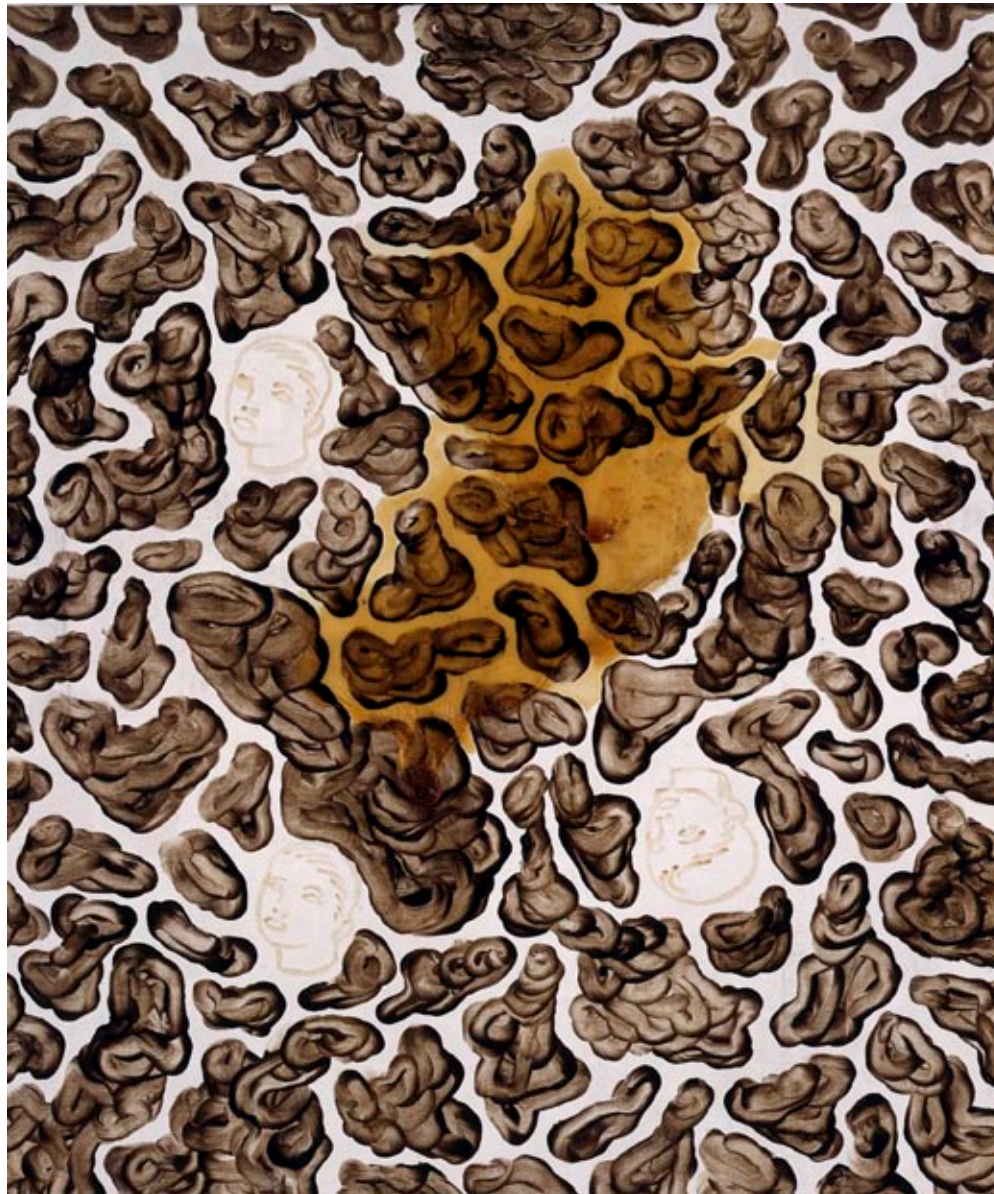
A Painting Representing Space, 1997

Installation; Painted walls with red paint and soil, framed paintings by the artist's father, and micro-phones; plus a room with walls painted with coats of milk, coca-cola and wine, speakers, a painting on canvas, shelves, glasses of water and empty packages
Miami Art Museum of Dade County, Miami, USA









**Painting, from the
Monochrome Series, 1997**

Soil and mothers milk on canvas, 146 x 195 cm
Collection of the artist

**Painting, from the
Monochrome Series, 1997**

Red ocher and mother's milk on canvas, 146 x 195 cm
Ulla and Greger Olsson Art Collection, Sweden

**Painting, from the
Monochrome series, 1997**

Soil, varnish and mother's milk on canvas, 100 x 185 cm
Private collection, Costa Rica



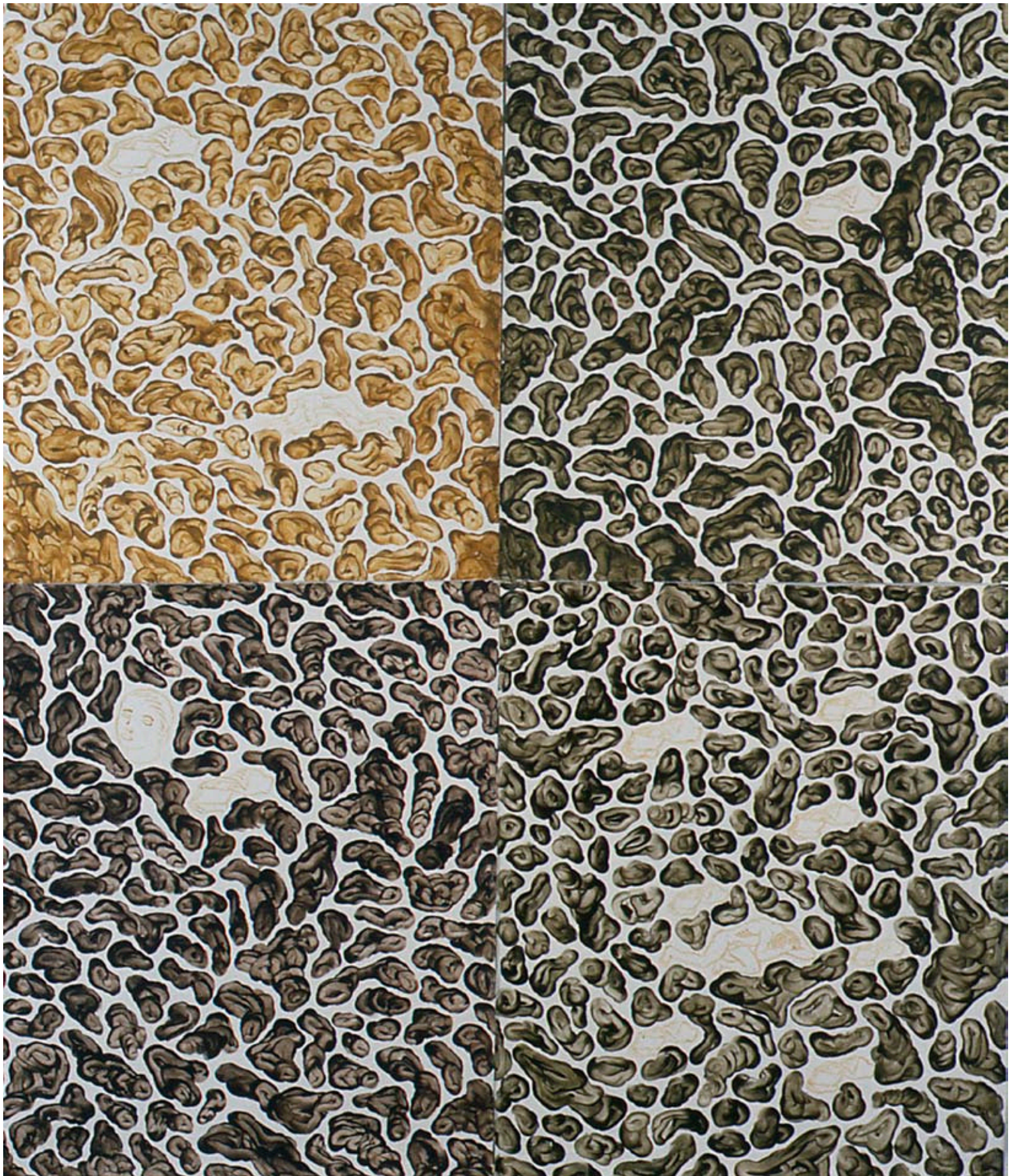
**Painting, from the
Monochrome Series, 1990**
Pigments, Indian ink and mother's
milk on canvas, 146 x 190 cm
Ulla and Greger Olsson Art Collection, Sweden





**Painting, from The
Monochrome Series, 1990**
Pigments and mother's milk on canvas,
each panel 100 x 60 x 5-10 cm
Private collection, Lund, Sweden

**Painting, from The
Monochrome Series, 1990**
Pigments and mother's milk on
canvas, each panel 60 x 50 cm





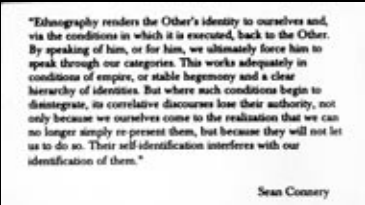


**Desembarco de los 33 en la
Agraciada, 1990**

Installed painting, painting on canvas, two
chairs, bags with water and hole on the floor
in Bienal del Barro, Museo de Arte Contem-
poráneo Sofía Imbert, Caracas, Venezuela

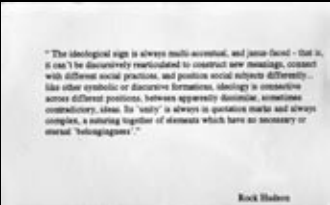
**Painting, from The
Monochrome Series, 1998**

Earth pigments and Indian ink
on canvas, 130 x 170 cm
Collection of the artist



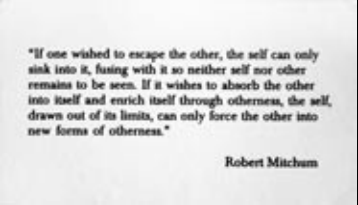
“Ethnography renders the Other’s identity to ourselves and, via the conditions in which it is executed, back to the Other. By speaking of him, or for him, we ultimately force him to speak through our categories. This works adequately in conditions of empire, or stable hegemony and a clear hierarchy of identities. But where such conditions begin to disintegrate, its correlative discourses lose their authority, not only because we ourselves come to the realization that we can no longer simply re-present them, but because they will not let us to do so. Their self-identification interferes with our identification of them.”

Sean Connery



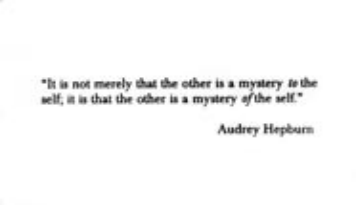
“The ideological sign is always multi-accentual, and janus-faced – that is, it can’t be discursively rearticulated to construct new meanings, connect with different social practices, and position social subjects differently... like other symbolic or discursive formations, ideology is connective across different positions, between apparently dissimilar, sometimes contradictory, ideas. Its ‘unity’ is always in quotation marks and always complex, a suturing together of elements which have no necessary or eternal ‘belongingness’.”

Rock Hudson



“If one wished to escape the other, the self can only sink into it, fusing with it so neither self nor other remains to be seen. If it wishes to absorb the other into itself and enrich itself through otherness, the self, drawn out of its limits, can only force the other into new forms of otherness.”

Robert Mitchum



“It is not merely that the other is a mystery *to* the self; it is that the other is a mystery *of* the self.”

Audrey Hepburn



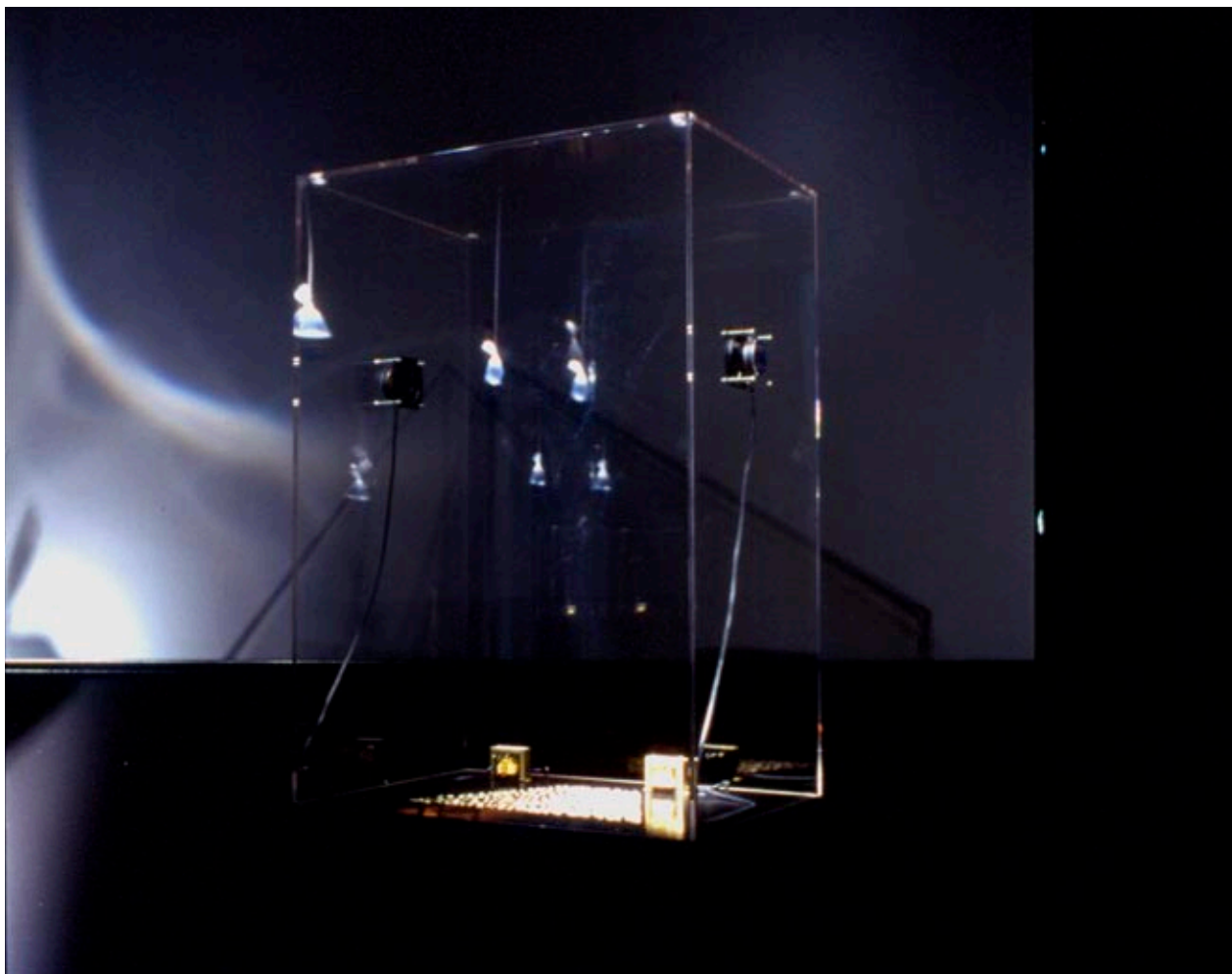
**Visiting cards, variable
dimensions, 1998**
Public owned

From the Monochrome Series, 1998
Silk screen and painting on amate paper, 240 x 120 cm,
Private Collection, Costa Rica

Codex, 1998
Acrylic and Indian ink on
amate paper, 120 x 240 cm
Daniel Yankelowitz Collection,
San José, Costa Rica



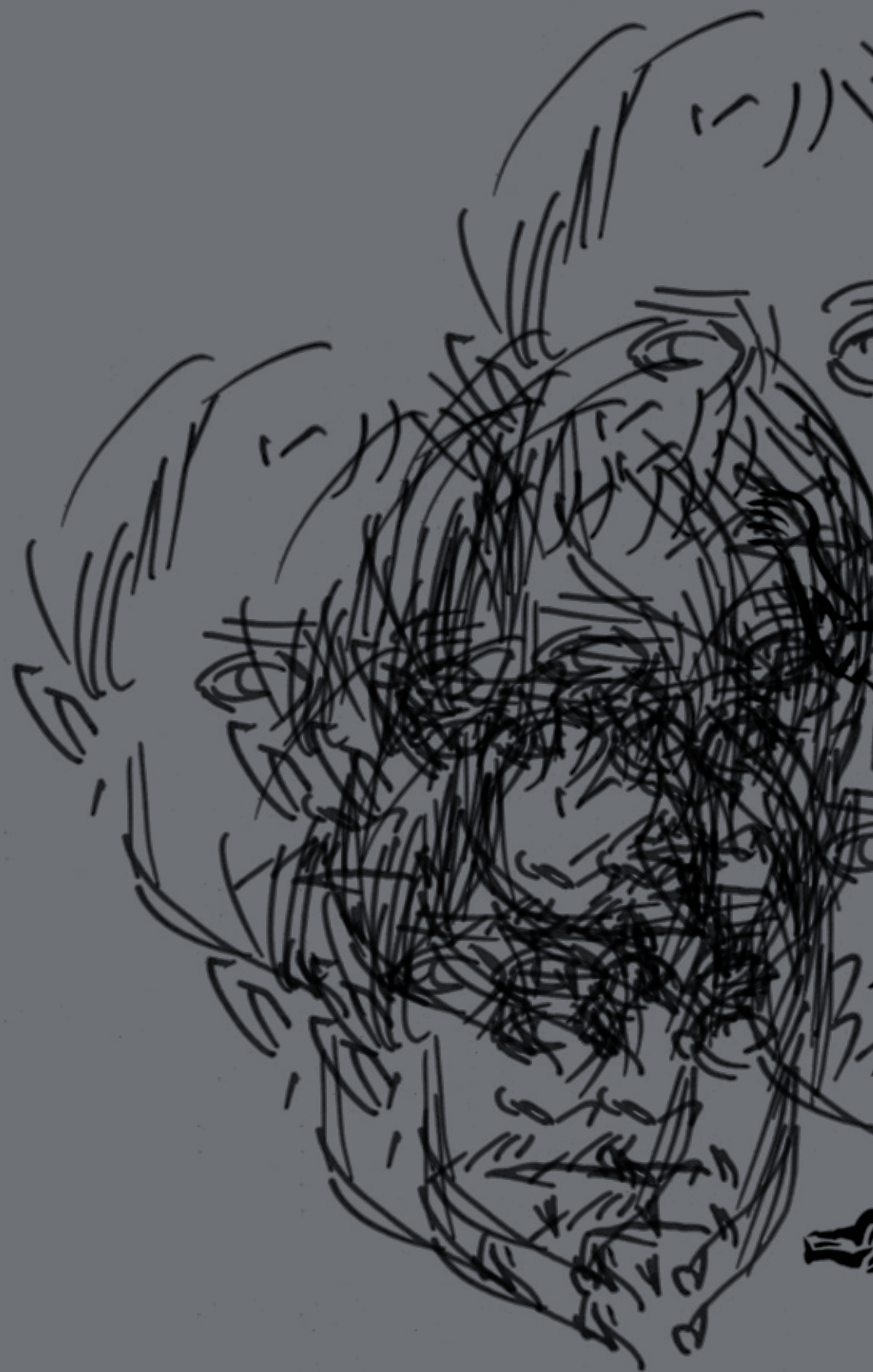




At the speed of your steps, 1998

Installation; microphones, speakers, show case, printed anamorphic figures on wooden floor, holes on the floor, chairs, framed miniatures and bags filled with water
In Crossings, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada







JET-LAG MAMBO

FIRST PART

Art is, according to Lacan, a received experience. Catherine David proposes it as a space of action for social avant-garde. For James Clifford, art is an ever-changing Western cultural category. There are more versions.

Beyond any personal sympathies, generalizations as these always remind me that Schopenhauer debated the question of whether the representation of the world was possible.

Is it possible to devise a representation of the world? I still believe the question is quite pertinent. Schopenhauer, it is known, did not pen down his thoughts in mother's milk. Nevertheless, the questions he poses have been foremost in my mind for quite some time. I would just like to add that my determination to approach his ideas became evidently complicated when I met the following claim:

"In a sense, to stand in two places is to stand in both presence and representation. For representations are not simply less real than what they represent; they are also real in that 'representations are social facts'. They are not, in other words, just re-presences, but presences. They are part of ourselves".

Sharon Stone

We were sitting in "Berlin Mitte", words describing a place in Berlin which at sometime was crossed by a dividing line. Jimmie was pleased and tired. A gallerist had asked him to make some prints to finance a project I cannot recall. Maria Theresa was in Marseille, getting some use from a flat for which they had paid in advance. I think we were desultorily talking about what Gerardo Mosquera had once said: acting from a situation is so much better than representing it. But we started to lose clarity because the waiter serving us in that Indian restaurant (Archuna), unfortunately and elegantly mixed German, Spanish and a kind of English. Jimmie was slimmer, slower too. I guess missing Maria Theresa made him skip meals. But he was in

shape. Moving his fingers in a salad with the parsimony of one who has repeated the gesture along the years, we talked about Berlin's noises (building in the city is allowed to start at seven in the morning; thousands of workers wait with tools in hand for the foreman's sign to start a hellish din). I recall that someone began to talk about the militaristic bad taste implicit in the notion of avant-garde and of the arrogance of the concept. We were bored. A bucketful of water fell from the third floor. It was one in the afternoon. A Turkish taxi driver became indignant without humour. He was soaked. A couple of tourists with a lanky teenage daughter stared suspiciously at the building's cornices. Alfredo ordered a coffee.

I had not seen Jimmie for a couple of years.

Because if art is conceived as an ever-changing cultural category, its attributes will constantly find themselves negotiated within this undecipherable restlessness of interests, powers, information and debates carried along by contexts – Anders and Maria tell me. All of which would greatly complicate our life, that much is clear. (It simply won't do!). Amid all these plagues of negotiations, the Van Gogh retrospectives and Guggenheim Museum franchises remain some of the few places offering stability. You can't spend your time enquiring what the others will or want, they both assure, smiling, when I get out of the car at the square. This thing of negotiating is a plague! they say, amused, and wave their hands in a quick good-bye.

When I get nervous, thinking about processes and abstractions (ever-changing!), I look for peace in more concrete things. For instance, I try to imagine and put in order collections of dishes, hammers, fruits or chairs; in short, familiar objects. Don't come now and tell me that chairs are so voluble as to always stand by the window on the lookout for "the ever-changing cultural category"! Chairs are serious objects. Or,

JET-LAG

better yet, I imagine a collection of fingernail clippings. Each individual with a collection of his (or hers) own fingernails.

Jimmie didn't order a coffee, and I could see that he immediately regretted it. Through the window, I had a view of a building from the 19th Century, imitating a style from the 17th. Later, Alfredo and I took a taxi to get to a place in Berlin, the name I do not recall. A demonstration by thousands of roller-skaters interrupted traffic for twenty minutes. We had come to a stop in front of a monument evoking the arrival into the city of the Russian forces at the end of World War II. Night was falling. Bored while waiting, the driver thought we were looking at the warlike vehicles. Actually, we were watching a languid and endless dusk. One of the tank pilots had been a woman. We noticed that the driver was affected. He told us a story of people growing vegetables in the parks. After the war, there were no clothes to wear. The demonstrators finished passing by. We were silent until we reached the place where Karin was waiting. Later, she would tell us the story about her neighbour. Karin had invited her in for tea. Her neighbour could not accept. Karin did not dare ask for the reason. She explained, anyway: she had to iron her money. Karin said nothing. Her neighbour went on, sometimes it happens that you get crumpled banknotes. Some people carry them in a pocket, just make a ball of them and the notes get crumpled. Karin was silent. Her neighbour said she could not simply put banknotes in such a state back into circulation, and gazed at Karin looking for assent. Karin looked her in the eye. Her neighbour, every evening before supper, went through her banknotes and ironed the crumpled ones. Before taking leave from each other, Karin proposed we meet the next day to go and see the art collection being installed at the new Reichstag. I was interested in seeing the house where Brecht had lived on his return from exile. I had heard mentioned that from one of the windows, Brecht could see the graveyard where he now is buried. Still, in spite of my ultimate desire for honesty, vagueness insists: Who are we?

What are our desires?

The artists, for instance: In which hotel do they stay?

"It did not look like art!", Germaine said with a happy smile. She was commenting on her own show in an Ottawa gallery.

If her art show, in an art gallery, did not look like art, then what she did was expand the notion of art, I commented, without much subtlety. Germaine looked at me. I hated to be rude. The notion of the alternative as a quarry for the renewal of the mainstream reminded me of a binge with Ron the day the toilets broke down in that snobbish place in SoHo. Another story of the SoHo. That bar had, as one of its attractions, the frivolity of individual toilets with transparent doors which, when locked from the inside, became milky and opaque. A horribly expensive contraption. Ronald J. and I, together with one of those persons who have affairs in the SoHo, were hustling around the ritual study of martinis and bootleg Cuban cigars, when the doors, Oh Fickleness of the Matters of the Spirit!, stopped turning opaque. Not that it is easy to topple aesthetic preconceptions like Formalism. Formalism has survived, in good health, the dematerialization of the art object, anti-art, bad art, non-art, the death of painting, the end of history and the attack of the installations and the post-Duchampian objects. Personally, I have always been a big enthusiast of the trend of post-Duchampian attitudes. Some collector has paid incomprehensible fortunes for a Van Gogh he has promised to take with him to the grave. A few years ago, a group of happy-go-lucky businessmen collectively bought a Picasso and cut it up into sections of a square centimetre. Each fragment was framed separately. Let us imagine solid gilded frames. Putting the pieces on sale, the profit shown generously exceeded the investment. The survival of Formalism is made visible not only when people pay high prices for concept art pieces of the sixties (a couple of pages with typed numbers). But also let us see – here is Formalism in ►►

WAMBO

» good health! – a recent revision of the history of concept art proposes to reduce this movement of work using just the word or grammatical language as support. The Formalist notion persists, of course, in the urgent necessity for formal breaks. To our despair, some Chinese or other let drop the suspicion that “the void expresses itself through form”.

Our reflections on form made Nikos think about other things. As a Greek, as an Australian and as Nikos, the strategy of a proposal (i.e. the emission and reception of certain language structures) was the formal clause occupying his thoughts but Nikos did not consider it prudent to shift the attention in a conversation such as this one. Thus, without noticing, we changed subject. Germaine thought with intensity, with that absolute and unmerciful seriousness of some young people. Afterwards, she started to speak lively and with a profoundly joyful smile. Because her husband, who is a writer, had, at the time, begun working in a restaurant, a common friend assumed he was studying as a chef. The few times I heard Geoffrey say he was working on a text, I always assumed that he was writing recipes.

MY TRAIN TRAVEL THROUGH THE CANADIAN WOODS.

As I had a day off, I decided to take a trip through the Canadian woods in an ancient train pulled by a steam locomotive. It was a short journey, conceived for nostalgia and leisure, to a sleepy village by the shore of a large lake. The trip gave me time enough to reach the village, go for a long walk, lunch and make my return the same afternoon. As soon I entered the carriage, I felt strange. I could not place the reason. One of my pleasures is that easy joke of trains: the feeling of being travelled. You sit in the carriage and the landscape parades while your body involves itself with the shoes or keeping organized whatever personal effects you carry. I must have had a bemused expression, because the girl who had checked my ticket approached me with the decisiveness of one who has the right to examine the other. She engaged me in a conversation that rapidly changed from the state of the weather to the book I had with me, and that I had absent-mindedly left on a seat. I read on the window-frame an admonition not to lean out

of it. The girl had strong opinions on fate, and you see I have already surrendered to the pleasure of the story. She guessed a month and a sign for my birthday and she told me all she could about her own. She was slim, had brown hair, asymmetrical eyes and an easy and contagious smile. The uniform accentuated the impression that she acted with real impudence. I started to automatically reread the admonition not to lean out of the window. An obese lady travelling with her husband turned around in her seat and said she did not agree with the Zodiac's determinism. It took me many readings to realize the admonition on the window frame was written in Swedish. The inscriptions in the carriage marking the services, the luggage racks and explaining how to open the doors, were all written in Swedish. The window curtains were the same that I had known during years of travels between Lund and Gothenburg, Lund and Stockholm, Scania and Falun and Uppsala and Boden: cloths of tough cotton with brown, orange and white-yellowish stripes. Without closing my eyes, I took a deep breath of the carriage's smell. The lake was still there, outside the window. The obese lady wanted to change to the seat beside me, despite her husband's demonstrations of discomfort. To make space for them, the girl in uniform lifted the book from the seat and pressed it to her chest.

I have done some truly weak projects. Vanity of the matters of the spirit! I sincerely regret the confidence that has been put in my ability to improvise under adverse conditions. More often than necessary, I have arrived to do a job and found the conditions to do it did not exist. The spaces did not agree with the information received beforehand, materials I had requested were not there, the technical infrastructure did not appear as promised, the support I had asked for would not arrive. A couple of times, I have managed to overcome the difficulties and, in spite of everything, I contrived to do something. On other occasions, I did not. Vanity of the matters of the spirit! Dizzy with institutional pressures, travelling, the immediacy of the opening and deeply rooted blindness, I have allowed these works to be presented even though I did not like them. Clumsiness of political strategies! I have exposed myself to professional ridicule many times!

Having said his farewells, Jimmie left his chair and, with his long legs, »



» charged for the corner. We had dined at some tables on the pavement, in front of the place where Käthe Kollwitz's house used to stand. The summer night dragged on, untroubled and calm. Jimmie walked with a roll like a ship, a white plastic bag hanging from his hand. He seemed to hesitate for a moment. He raised his eyes above the tops of the lime trees, to the sky and the roofs. Halting, he swept space a couple of times and, with his head leaning slightly to his right, he decided on a street. His steps gained speed until he disappeared among the cars. Alfredo watched him with an amused smile. Talking, we could say that there are no works of art. Just art. We could also say that, among the profusion of things of the world, some of them are read through these systems we call art. We could say it is the gaze of these systems, which looks for significance in the things of the world.

We could carry on saying it is the gaze of these systems which looks for recognition in the things of the world. We could say it is the gaze of these systems which looks for meanings in the profusion of things of the world. We could say, that morning of sun and tousled clouds was an end-of-summer morning, and that there was a freshness in the air. I was enthusiastic about the idea of leaving the city for a while. The first time we drove out with Alfredo Pernin, searching for red ochre in the South-east of Sweden, we did not use the map I had with me. Alfredo, whose curiosity once led him to study geology, crossed the green hills, fixed his eyes on the electric wires, the fields, the roads and found his bearings in the landscape whilst murmuring to himself. After a while, he turned the car into a lane, stopped and said we could start searching there. We walked following a brook, between fields and fences. We came to a place where the brook cut a small gully. We dug into the gully's wall and I already knew we were going to find the ochre. I know: at that exact moment, the situation, for myself, embodied the romantic. Back at the car, Alfredo rolled a cigarette and again looked at the fields around. The thing is, he told me, that beyond its being one's purpose or not, the gaze explains. Cartography is, as so many other things, a convention to represent mental processes, he continued. Perception, even without verbally proposing it, organizes. I handed over the rags we were using to clean our muddy hands, and told him his discourse was very artistic. This did not worry Alfredo at all. To make

myself clearer I assured him that it was perfectly possible to project a desire to organize knowledge. It was getting dark very slowly as it only darkens under the Northern summers. Alfredo started the car and we drove away, to have coffee at the corner of a small village lost among the beets. To Alfredo, any movement in the universe's energy was an organizing endeavour, however much chance, chaos and the apparent whimsicality of certain phenomena would show us neither logic nor respect. He clarified that the question, in art, he was rather fascinated by was that these phenomena should have been so intimately associated with a person's identity. I told him the tradition of the contemporary artist could not easily break with this atavism, and mentioned the story of the name changes of the Chinese masters. In this case, the cliché of the Chinese masters is appropriate. Whenever they acquired some prestige they would move to another province, someplace where they would not be known, at times even changing style and regularly signing their works with apocryphal names. Later collecting took care of cataloguing and collating. Soon enough, there were informative guides of the itineraries, styles and names adopted by each of the masters. In spite of the coffee being bitter and too hot we stayed sitting to find out where the other's conversation would lead us. Alfredo calmly said that the incentive, in the urge for identity, in the cited example was the necessity to fetishise the object. I loved to respond with the classical answer that the artist's identity is, itself, a fetishised object. Rolling another cigarette, Alfredo murmured something like this that what he frankly thought exhausting about the artists was the huge amount of work they invested into negotiating their projects at the moment of organizing knowledge.

In spite of their endeavours resulting in a formal renewal of the modernist repertoire, I cannot but feel sympathy for many artists who worked with the ideas we now call conceptualism. Most of all, I am enthusiastic about the project they called "the dematerialization of the art object". I understand that in this proposal, what they identified as the core of the piece was not any intrinsic quality of the physical object, which could be substituted or manufactured in the total absence of the "artist", but specific ideas or notions trafficked by perception ("perception" meaning something more than the sum or combination of the five senses). Separate from the intrinsic qualities of the

object, these notions marked, filtered and somehow appropriated by those choosing to assume the game, were conceded as specific heritage of each of the consciences involved in the process. This is, I think, an ethical proposal potentially implying a high sense of respect, by those involved, in the relationship with the other. It also appears to be a proposal of high subversive potential, as the simple fact of articulating a certain perception enables for the property of the piece to reside in each one's disposition to implement a sense in it. It would be difficult to find, in this area, a radical democracy project more ambitious and paradoxical in its orchestration.

Peter Arnesson worked for a few summers as a taxi driver in Göinge, a region outside the main highways of Scandinavia. A broken landscape, with large areas still covered in firs and oak woods, Göinge seems at times as remote as it was in the age of the Viking farmers. Thinly populated and with sparse communications, the local administration arranged that on certain days of the week, the senior inhabitants could make use of a taxi to deliver their shopping ordered from stores in the vicinity. Wearing a uniform that clashed with both the remoteness of the area and the long-awaited summer sun, this was the part of the job Peter liked best: picking up the orders at the market, pharmacy and liquor store in the village and heading for the woods to deliver them. I shall only tell the story of the visit to Petter Pettersson's, aged 86; badly told and stumbling because, in the short hour and a half we were there, so many specific and insignificant things happened, my account could not begin to embrace the task.

We parked in front of the house and Peter sounded the horn. With tousled grey hair flying in the breeze, a white shirt buttoned all the way up and dark brown trousers, vest and coat, Petter Pettersson appeared in the frame of the door of a house hiding in the trees' shadow. He went back in as quickly as he had appeared. "He is putting the coffeepot on", said Peter. The rest was an uninterrupted tide in which Petter Pettersson enveloped us with fulminating energy. He showed us the light bulb he had in the living room. The only one, he said, as he did not need any in the other rooms, too many for a lonely old man. He, then, treated us to a short account starting with his great-grandfather, who had built the house, and continuing with that of his own solitude, a bachelor without children to continue family history. He showed us the old shotgun with ►►

» which he used to hunt rabbits and told us at least three detailed and pertinent stories. After that, the story of the time he fell sick and was taken to the hospital in Lund, for the time a new medical marvel. He showed us pictures of the trip, the only one in his life, where we could see a young man sitting on the grass with some luxuriant trees in the background; pictures in front of a red brick building. He was wearing a white shirt. He was still proud of the experience. From the package of photographs wrapped in newspapers and tied with a purple ribbon, we had to look at the rest. Some were of people with stiffly done hair and transparent gazes. Petter had already forgotten who they were, but the three of us looked at them as if leaning into a well. Petter Pettersson had ordered a bottle of liquor, which we could not leave untasted, even though my friend Peter was not a fan of the beverage, and drinking could have jeopardized his job, as spirits and driving was a strictly forbidden combination. Peter, with the knowledge that, ultimately, the conversation was the part making the visit meaningful, always confronted the moment with the resolve of one who knows what has to be done in a given situation.

Petter Pettersson cheerfully insisted in attacking the liquor, remembrances and his ideas about things. He philosophised on the world of senses (the body, in summer, feels as if life has a different purpose than in winter), on knowing, on reading (he did not read much because he had few books around him, but he always read and no reading had ever been indifferent; all books, whether good or not, are interesting), on youth (he suddenly lost the gist and started talking about signing on and sailing to Panama), on why he was not interested in travelling to Paris, and on the sounds he listened to, sitting in that same armchair, when he had nothing else to do.

Whilst talking, Petter Pettersson brewed coffee several times, sought and brought diverse objects and packages, served two different kinds of cookies, hustled the bottle of liquor, lifted the cat onto his lap and then put it down again on the floor every time he got up to look out of different windows, with the routine of one who has done the same thing for a long time. From the beginning, Petter knew that the moment would come for us to leave, so he had devised several strategies to delay our departure. Peter Arnesson was counting on it, so he started to take leave with much parsimony, knowing we would not be on our way until probably the fifth attempt.

Sometime later, departure was unavoidable. There were other clients waiting for their orders. Petter Pettersson knew that was the ultimate reason and he could no detain us any longer. He then made the final request, almost with sadness. He asked us that, before leaving, we should go by the pen to say good-bye to the cow. The three of us went out and around to the back of the house. In a fenced space under some dark trees was the cow. It ripped up tufts of grass with a muffled noise and flicked its tail systematically, chasing away mosquitoes. A large bird alighted on its head and the cow looked at us for a while, chewing. Petter Peterson went into the pen. He had put on his cap and straightened his shirt collar. He slowly walked up to the cow and stood in front of it, his hands in his pockets. He remained like that for a moment, he and the animal watching each other, and I had the feeling that we were all doing that, looking at the cow. He then turned and moved towards us with a shy smile. The cow followed him and let us pet it. It was warm and damp. Petter went on smiling, now with more assurance. He came out of the pen and walked us to the car. In silence he shook hands with both of us and stood watching, without a word as we drove away amidst the blots of light piercing through the trees.

There are horrible places. There are those quite scary and horrible. Yet a chair has always appealed to me as a poignant place. In particular empty chairs. I know Jimmie does not like chairs. I hate armchairs. I mean, I like them, but for others. I cannot sit at ease in them. This does not mean I cannot enjoy the pleasure I see in people when they are comfortably lounging in an armchair. But it is different with chairs. I feel a deep attraction for empty chairs. I do not mind if they, occasionally, have people on them. But whenever this happens, I lose the chair and all I can see is the sitting person. On the other hand an empty chair is definitely, a chair.

There are sparks of genius, like the paintbrush, the scissors, the ball. Strategic inventions. I think the chair is an impeccable place. Empty and full spaces; the rhythm of its parts; what receives and what supports; the space that is, the one it generates around itself and (marvel!) the one it suggests. I wonder the Tao te ching does not speak of chairs more often. There the Self is addressed as a wagon and its parts; also thereabouts there is a »



»» mention of the hub of the wheel and the void of the cup. A chair is, basically, an affair of space and absence. I cannot fathom that Jimmie does not understand the paradigm of the chair. The joke of being and not Being there, its stupid witticism.

Art does not pretend to be true as other things are true. Or maybe it does. Art, perhaps, aspires to be true in the same way as anything else is. Maybe all that happens is actual. Although some things are truly interesting. The Chinese artists changed province, name and style in order not to be erased by an attachment to the self. Once, Oscar Hemer and I went to receive Gayatri Spivak upon her arrival at Malmö. She appeared in a wheelchair escorted by two huge policemen. They were all smiles. Oscar and I were pale, thinking that during the trip from Delhi, the Spivak may have broken a leg or injured her back. A seminar was starting the day after in which she was, without a doubt, the star. Once the wheelchair was left in our hands and we could start towards a taxi, Spivak happily jumped off the chair and gave us an effusive hug. Rescuing us from our amazement, she told us she had played the old game of the Ailing Lady, with the result that she had been well treated and, for once, had not been pestered for having to travel the world with a bloody Indian passport.

Primitivism, it has been said enough times, is a recurrent necessity of cultures that construct a classical conscience of themselves. The need for an archaic past, a development and, probably, a historical destiny, explain the need for the Primitive. What is surprising is to see how, in our present society, this myth of the Primitive has become generalized as popular belief. Hollywood advances it constantly. The massive success of the heroic Joseph Beuys confirms it. After a few days spent with exotic (non-German) peoples, recovering from an accident, Beuys worked for forty years until generating a vast shamanistic rhetoric from that experience. The idea of the artist as someone special managing the passage between worlds may seem simplistic, but enjoys good health. Another thing I remember from the time we went to receive Spivak is that she clasped in her hands a small wine-coloured purse. I found even more surprising, a small hat, coquettishly angled on her short hair. I think Spivak has returned to Malmö a couple more times. I have never seen Mattis again.

There is no better way to generate identity, defend identity, discuss identity and negotiate identity than contemporary art of the last 300 years.

But the strength of form is really paradigmatic. The codifications of value, either clear or fuzzy, always generate turbulences. From the horizon of Chinese aesthetics, based on the experience of the Chi, the difference in value between a painting, an accident or a stone is not functionally precise. All of which does not hinder excesses as that samurai who safeguards a manuscript valuable to his lord, sheltering in a cut he makes in his belly before being overwhelmed by the flames. If the void is expressed through form, the mode of relating to the contents may tend to considered negotiations with perception, the last one understood as it was by certain concept artists. The void may also engender horror, authoritarianism or pitfalls. Truism teaches us that the paradigmatic relationship with the forms is just one step away from the programmatic relationship with Good Taste. Truism exists. It is not known why the glasses of the toilets in that place in the SoHo broke down. Or rather, I do not know.

It is clear that one of the inconvenients of speaking of “organizing knowledge”, is that the idea itself awakens associations with activities which could be related to explanations or pedagogy. On that account, Duclós and Alfredo are right: in principle, any activity organizes knowledge. The dilemma is to reference that activity within the language systems. To put it otherwise: the problem is to make the experience of organizing knowledge work within the structures proposed by the languages. The Sufis say, at one time or other, that whatever is not transmissible, it is not an experience. Our need to generalize and transmit is powerful.

Taste and Attitude carry Ideology. The Academic hides the Self. Our art is crisscrossed by signatures and dates. Twelve percent of the world's population now has direct access to a telephone. It is said that the personality test known as Rorschach is the only psychology test that works independently of specific cultural contexts. Written language is a problem. The Rorschach test is, let us say, an honest example of an arts-and-crafts basket. A bundle of wicker switches with

mystery. If I read your cards with Rorschach blots, you read my reading; more switch bundles, more mystery, more wicker. If I read your reading, more wicker, more mystery.

The paintbrush is another brilliant invention. We have been told Homo habilis was the first to make tools some 1.6 or 1.9 million years ago. Now we are told the Australopithecus garhi, even 2.5 million years ago, was making stone tools to break open the bones of his meals and reach, so to speak, to the marrow of things. Furthermore, in the region where the remains of A. garhi were found, it appears there was no available rock suitable for the manufacture of the tools, which means that the A. garhi used to carry their tools wherever they went. We all understand what these discoveries imply: that by being able to reach the bone marrow, the A. garhi had access to a diet rich in energy and fats (which, among other things, would enable them to expand into tougher regions of the planet) and, furthermore, as a consequence of a richer diet, their brains would receive a greater impulse to increase their capacity and develop more complex tasks. Scientists believe that, once the process of manufacturing tools had started, this same exercise, combined with dietary change, produced a qualitative transformation in the use of the brain. What this text proposes to show, in function of the presented documentation, is that the creation of a technology is to be found directly linked to the demands to satisfy concrete needs, and that its own development generates other needs, not always foreseeable. I explained to Mónica that what entitled me to the white lie of being an artist, was that, in my work, I persisted in the use of the paintbrush. Mónica looked at me and I saw she interpreted my words as if I had assured her I did not smoke nor bathed every day. I also told her that, of my own free will, I had reduced my language of images to no more than thirty, and that I endeavoured to repeat them over a period of, let us say, ten years. I explained to her that if I could I would like to keep on doing this for a longer period, say, 75 years. She went on looking at me with the same eyes. I developed my idea that following the desire to establish historical vanguards, it could be said that the first global movement in art was the use of red ochre. She told me that history always taught her. Already a bit nervous, I explained I always tried to respect the audience's intelligence. She smiled gracefully, moved her head, which I saw outlined against the sea, arranged her notes and ►►

» returned an intelligent gaze. We have all seen apes making utensils. For instance, pick a branch, pluck certain leaves and use it to draw water from a hole. We have also seen animals committing suicide, or we are aware that human beings who have grown up isolated from other humans, develop hardly any language. Once, in Tuscany, a scorpion hurled itself on the tip of my paintbrush and wrestled for all its worth with it. What is brilliant about the paintbrush is that it transports matter from one place to another. To think continues to be a way to transform matter.

Jimmie opened a bottle of beer and passed it to Mónica. A French mining company had exploited materials which I now do not recall, in that small village in the middle of the desert. To facilitate the need for the engineers' wives to attend mass, they had ordered a metal church from Brussels. The engineer who had designed the church was called Eiffel. The street was a dust cloud where the school's children rehearsed the parade for the country's National Day. They marched with a teacher full of vocation and a car with a loudspeaker playing music. All sang, more or less in unison: "It was a tiny, tiny bikini, with yellow polka dots". They all wore uniforms. The air was very dry. Mónica said the occasion seemed favourable. That, at this moment, the world seemed favourable and that we should visit the metal church to look at the stained-glass windows.

It is not that art has become something that much different from what it was and that now it is only an activity existing in function of a context. The novelty consists, rather, that in certain cases, context has explicitly become a material in art. Sometimes a support or a context. This is why painting has lost criminality and becomes again interesting as discourse support. I mean that painting, stripped now of modernist certainty, is as interesting in its own way as chairs, art history, the name of the artist or the interpretative text. As I am writing this, I hear the news that in the State of Kansas, the Education Council has eliminated evolution theory from the students' evaluation exams. It was not explicitly forbidden. Instead, they are trying to put it in conditions of survival akin to those the dinosaurs may once have had.

I once witnessed a long conversation with a sculptor colleague who proposed an interesting wish for his work: if the entire

universe were to disappear, leaving behind just one of his pieces, he imagined the huge All could be re-created based on the information contained in the sculpture. Someone quickly pointed out that it was a commendable wish, as long as the universe could also be re-created, in principle, based on the information contained in anything else, for instance, the droppings of a fly. The colleague was infuriated by a comparison he deemed undignified.

I have the clear eyes and the narrow mind of the Celts, Rimbaud used to say. During the Tang Dynasty, in the 9th Century of our reckoning, a group of artists called Yi Ping worked within a so extremely codified tradition that they developed something we would not hesitate to consider as an anti-art attitude. Among other things, they used to run around the silk canvases onto which they threw colour, they sat to meditate on them, they dragged them around, or used their paint-dripping hair as paintbrushes. One of the critical instances of our immediate tradition appears when the system of symbolic production of art begins to be visualized as a whole and totality. In a kind of anthropological conscience awareness of art, the art object is considered as carrier of cultural paradigms. As an agent, eventually cathartic, of a symbolic weave. To respect the intelligence of the audience (or not) is part of the process where the work's reception and emission have infected each other; that is the colloquium. René did not beat anybody that night, nor the following nights. Still, he could not free himself from knowing he yearned for that fight. With his hands stuck in the leather jacket's pockets, he started on his way home. He routinely avoided pools of water, the corners' apexes and the dark hallways. It would be interesting to produce works in which any text or descriptive label projected on them would be immediately fagocited and embodied into the piece. And now comes the turn of the truly unsustainable operation. Within this, I do not only wish to defend the work structures that make the relationships between object and perception the preferred resulting products. I also suggest proposing the vain aspiration that these actions should append themselves to the chain of the ten thousand things of the world, or, as the Argentines would call it, the flow of things. What is dignified and worthy of consideration is the ethical negotiation. Miguel and I have »



» something which could well be called a profound friendship. From the beginning, although without being explicit, we proposed a mode of sincerity and confrontation in which with time, humour, respect, patience and a good repertoire of cheats would be included. It is known of the masculine inclination to build friendships between males in which rare practices of abstract thought are painstakingly woven. I mean, among men, recounting intimacies is not as important as the subtle architecture of more or less idiotic symbolic exchanges.

We went to see the metal church. I do not recall if the stained-glass windows we saw were the original ones or if they had been replaced. I do remember the light was soft and limpid, and a tiled, checkered floor. The solitude of the church was not very different from the solitude of the place where I had just bought cigarettes. A counter left to itself and a fan that was out of order. Through a rickety door, someone appeared who took my order and returned my change without a word. While we walked, I again went over a conversation we had about the convenience, or inconvenience, of a show's curator having a hidden agenda not shared with the artists participating in a project. I recalled my experience with an Austrian curator. After installing for five days in Graz, just as the piece was beginning shape up, the curator, whom I had never seen before, came into the room. The show was, as we had begun to discover, an encyclopaedic recount of all the contemporary non-European, non-WASP artists who had worked in more or less international contexts for the last five or ten years. The curator was surrounded by an attentively listening crowd to which we were never introduced. The curator commented, amazed by my work and asked me how things were going. I told him of my sincere surprise at so many acquaintances represented in the project. With evident interest, he asked me if I had contact with any of the artists. I answered that, from a total of about forty, I knew, personally, twenty-two. The curator turned around and, confronting his retinue, explained (*voilà!*) this was what he had always known: that there were alternative networks for artistic production and circulation, marginal to the Western Art System. "They all know each other!", he said, and pointed at me with contagious joy. This actual show, he concluded, would be the first to make such structures visible. He looked at me, love-struck, and I returned a placid smile. Before departing,

followed by the group, he stuck his trunk up his arse, farted, and blew his brains off. We kept on working hard, I lost my concentration and the resulting piece was weak. I chatted with the colleagues and we proved his theory. Miguel has always intuited that working with art was a vain and necessary gesture. I never argued that there was some truth in the Sartrian sentence stating "One supports one's vices so that the vices may support one". The church was full of dust, just like those works on paper in Vila's studio. The railroad's Central Station in Santiago was also designed by Eiffel. In San José de Costa Rica, there is a school, aptly dubbed the Iron School, manufactured in Belgium.

The Spanish Colonial Period was very clear in its urbanization ideas. Cities were planned following a checkerboard pattern with streets and avenues laid out perpendicularly to each other. Further, even growth was theoretically legislated long before its actual happening. The streets, naturally, received specific names, often honouring saints. More recently, urban nomenclature achieved the most rational of proposals: streets were divided into streets proper and avenues, and again, into systems of even and odd numbers along two axes. This notwithstanding, in the daily practice of all Costa Ricans, places are described in function of other places and their more or less relative distances from each other. For instance: for a time I lived at 1348 1st Avenue, between 11th and 15th Streets. This address never worked in practice. If I ever gave it out, people would look at me with surprise and I was asked, with a show of obvious tolerance for my exoticism, if I could say it again, but "the Tico way". Alternatively, I could be requested to be more specific and state the "exact" address. The exact version of this former address went: "30 metres west from Bansbach" (a music shop), or "50 longish metres east from the National Assembly". More examples: "250 metres south of The White Horse, house with cypresses, by the security guard's booth" (my second, and current address in Costa Rica). But there are more peculiar ones: "from what was the old shop..."; or directly tragic: "from the lady selling lotteries at Cinco Esquinas of Tibás..."; or directly memorable: "from the Burnt Dog...", "from Oscar Arias' home...", "from the Invisible Friend...", etc. In spite of other nomenclatures proposed by the State and the Municipalities, the urban practice of Costa Rican addresses follows

this pattern. To describe a place, people resort to mentioning another, making it impossible for someone newly arrived to get his bearings in the city, unless he negotiates his situation with the local inhabitants. Nevertheless, even the most experienced inhabitants cannot escape negotiation: their better knowledge of the city notwithstanding, they always have to beseech others in order to adjust and trim the course. Cardinal points are a more precise reference, as they are recognized in function of the mountains surrounding San José. Still, there are four cardinal points and every place may potentially be defined in, at least, four different ways, depending on the direction from which one arrives. If using a compass is not quite common, I would dare to say it is at least more frequent than using a map (there are no maps with nonofficial references). For the new arrivals, the feeling of being in a place of infinite descriptions, of innumerable memories, of inexhaustible narratives, is generally overwhelming. Regarding social identity, Costa Rica is self-defined in function of political agreements of compact rhetoric on the Social Welfare State. And also, by the definitive absence of an army. We returned to the hotel that was once the abode of the French engineers, feeling the world was incomplete.

And the West: In what hotel does it live?

To construct is, finally, probably unavoidable. Whether by taste, by the explicit will of mental lucidity, or simply by accident, gazes and purposes construct.

In what hotel do the baskets live?

The notion of fragment exists insofar as we handle notions of totality or of structure. Tolerance, I suppose, is animated by an intuition of love or of death. Taking an ethical stance is not necessarily a discourse.

Art, which is not a thing, is what we human beings make of that situation. The text is also the reader's mirror. Unlike a stone or a painting, always there and over which a gaze may sweep, the book is a closed object, opening only at the reading of the gaze. The text is like a fact we may, or may not, take into account. There are no pathetic words per se, just in relation to a context. There is no lost time in a language. Another word arousing phobias within me, besides the term vanguard, is the

verb "to create" and all its derivatives (adjectives and nouns) routinely applied to the activities of art. Creative, I think, are certain processes as those leading to the appearance of the scissors, the cup, the sexual exchange of genetic information, or cheese. The ground was moist and the stones displayed greening mosses. Without being unbearable, the morning was warm even under the spruce thick shade. The oaks dominated, with only a few sparse beeches, and there were acorns enough to fatten a herd of wild boars. Red and roe deer wood, I thought. I was looking for sloe and had hopes of finding some bilberries and mushrooms. Certain woods excite within me a curiosity for appetite, and I wander through them imagining good courses and animated dinners with friends. I do not think I heard anything, but I turned to see a shape barely showing through the scrub. I found a few fat and velvety raspberries and my mouth watered. I walked towards where I thought I had seen the shape, but some brambles were in my way. Believing that time spent walking in the woods is never wasted, I was about to take a detour to avoid the thorns. I picked a fistful of blackberries and ate them up with no hurry. I thought I could see a recognizable object among the brambles. I reached with my hand among the thorns until I finally could get out what undoubtedly was the leg of a chair. It was badly weathered and still had, sticking out on one end, two or three nails. I was still looking at it when, again, I had the feeling a massive body was moving in the scrub. This time around, I did not pay much attention. I had found that leg up in the mountain and my most current worry was to look for the possible remains of a chair. Shortly afterwards, I saw a chair back among the brambles. In spite of having help from the leg and a stick, I could not avoid hurting my hands and arms and they started to sting as if with rancour. The back was entangled in the scrub and I understood it would not be worth trying to get it out. I looked at it for a while, in that half-light of dry leaves and new shoots. Determined to do something, I went on looking for more remains, possibly more legs. Our relationship with food, somehow represents the function of alchemy, according to Victor Grippo. The transformation of energy. Another example, although I cannot quite decipher this one, is the one suggested by Marx that anything imagined by one man, another is able to realize. Once, I was imprisoned together with the architect who had designed the place where we both were confined. Miguel says that all that happens is true. I abandoned the brambles ►►

» and looked around. I returned home with a basket full with sloe, bilberries, chanterelles and cepes. Lying on its bottom was the chair's leg.

Jimmie sat. He was happy. I noticed he was travelling with his back towards the front of the train, and I did not think it correct to sit in front. My embarrassment was not long lived as shortly after having shown our tickets to the conductor we moved over to the restaurant and Jimmie served from a bottle of wine that I had not seen arrive, I do not know whether because I was immersed in a tale or a commentary. We checked in at the same hotel, Le Compostelle, and we did not see each other again for the rest of the trip.

Spanish for vortex (NT).

**Moravia, from the serie Always There
(fragments), 2005**

Digital photography, 150 x 400 cm
Teorética Collection, San José, Costa Rica



SECOND PART

DON'T LOOSE YOUR COMPOSURE

or “Yo no quiero ser buenamoza”

Among the kidnapped Uruguayans, detained at the National Stadium of Chile in 1973, I remember the arrival of El Canario. Not one week in Chile, he had been arrested in a massive round up. Owing to the military frenzy, scrupulously paranoid and xenophobic, he witnessed the out-of-hand shooting of two persons, guilty of speaking with an Argentinian accent. When it was his turn for interrogation, he had no other option than to pass himself as mute. They thought him a Chilean. This and other confusions allowed him to arrive alive to the National Stadium, at the time converted into an infamous detention centre. He recounted that, sometimes, he would lock himself up in a toilet or draw himself into a solitary corner to pronounce a few words. He said that hearing his own voice helped him to know he was not mute.

I had just one conversation with him. We looked at the tiers full with prisoners and the empty playing field. Big rotating sprinklers rhythmically sprayed water on the grass. Above and beyond the last tier, we could see the solitary golden tops of the Cordillera. The night was falling. We were, as always, thirsty and hungry.

El Canario told me of his girl friend. He did not know where she was. He told me he loved her. And he told me he loved her even when she, sometimes, fell into a deep well where he could not reach her. He told me he loved her even if, sometimes, it was as if she were present, standing behind her own eyes, vibrant and watchful, seeing herself speaking beside her. He told me he always loved her.

Between words, we looked again at the sprinklers and the mountains.

After a while he told me, laughing, that in an anthology of German poetry from the twenties, he had read that: “...the more powerful you are, more you feel compelled to be elegant”. Still

laughing, he also remembered it stating: “it is very difficult to give your best at work and, at the same time, to look down on your work”.

The rotating sprinklers had, at times, a hypnotic power on us all. The short profile of the mountain range burning in the evening sun, another.

In that conversation, El Canario showed me how Jack Kerouac and Guevara were similar: the travels, the escape forward, the text from Mallarmé, the fascination for the Other, the excesses, the heroes, the hair done like Elvis, the deep and nervous gaze, even the facial traits, the clothes, the snapshots taken by friends and the diverse rhetorics of the new American dreams. To see the similitudes was to speak, without naming them, of their differences.

September 19, 1918

June 1919

1507 Sarmiento Street

1743 Alsina Street

Why Marcel Duchamp travelled to Buenos Aires, in that South American spring of 1918, is a matter that has been much discussed. What is clear is that he stayed there till mid 1919. Two of his pieces are mentioned as originating in that city, and the addresses where he lived and worked are known (Sarmiento Street, Alsina Street). Julio Cortázar used to tell the story, passed on in Buenos Aires, about Duchamp's will to meet Macedonio Fernández (the author of *El Museo de la Novela de la Eterna*). Macedonio lived in a hotel not far away, devoted to drinking mate and to systematically strumming a guitar, badly. In Córdoba, Argentina, I have met people close to Gombrovic (another chess player), who affirmed Duchamp never managed to be received.

In 1538, the first official martyrology of The Catholic Church comes out in print. It mentions Saint Josafat, celebrated since then, and until a recent revision, on November 27th. Saint Josafat had reached great popularity among the believers because of a text (The Golden Legend) signed by Jacobo de Vorágine where the biography of the saint was divulgated.

The Golden Legend had early antecedents. The original version had been written in Sanskrit, in India, in the beginning of the Christian Era. A few centuries later, an Iranian translation appeared (the character was named Budasaf), which was translated into Arabic (Judasaf) around the 7th Century. Of this one, there is a translation into Georgian (Iodasaph), from the 9th Century. In the 10th Century, Saint Eutimio Hagiorita translated this text into Greek (Joasap), which, in turn, was translated into Latin by the 11th Century. This is the version which, enhanced and, again, modified by the above-mentioned Vorágine, knows a massive diffusion in the West.

The original Sanskrit text was called The Life of the Bodhisattva, and endeavoured a divulgation of the life of The Buddha. As of the Georgian text, the life of this Indian prince, whose successive encounters with a blind man, a leper, an old man and an ascetic will always conform the fictionalized beginnings of his mystery, will start to acquire a Christian identity. Twenty centuries after its historical birth and seven after its Georgian version (and one cannot help thinking in the coincidence of the name Vorágine), the avatars of Prince Siddhartha (Josafat), The Buddha, are canonized by the Church of Rome.

Carlos Capelán



POST-COLONIAL LIBERATION ARMY (rematerialización)

PCLA(r)

Installation, 1995
La Zitelle, Venice, Italy





PCLA(r) PROCLAMATION

- 1:** The PCLA (r) proclaims that the world is full of objects.
- 2:** That there are objects that are classified according to fluctuating categories.
- 3:** That art objects aspire, equally and distinctly, to be: a) equal to any other object in the world; or: b) distinct in value from all other objects in the world.
- 4:** That if, owing to the fact of functioning within the systems of a category, i.e. art, these objects are perceived as singular and different from the others, this perception is an instance of power of the group that generates it.
- 5:** That art objects are not characterized by their materiality.
- 6:** That the fundamental material that art objects consist of is art.
- 7:** That art being a gaze searching for its signification in the things of the world, another formative matter in the constitution of the art object is, precisely, the gaze.
- 8:** That the fluctuating cultural categories composing the many visions of the worlds of art propose appraisals, which are diverse and sometimes parallel to each other, both of the art object and of the object of art.
- 9:** That it is not easy.
- 10:** That the processes of symbolic abstraction are part, reciprocal and/or constituting, of the processes of abstraction of the economic.
- 11:** That being Artist, Art, Institution, Discourse, Text, the Symbolic, Gaze, that which gives signification to the art object, the value of the art object exists only to the extent that the preceding elements are projected onto the activity of art.
- 12:** That the art object is a space where many spaces coincide and mutually ignore each other.
- 13:** That it would be false to accuse the Conceptual Art's movement and its purpose of Dematerialization of the Art Object, of having clarified the strategy presently applied by the speculative or financial capital, or of having inspired the economic process of post-industrial society according to which the sectors devoted to services, maintenance and entertaining- leisure time occupy population sectors that are larger than those devoted to the production of material consumer goods.
- 14:** That, in a sense, to stand in two places is to stand in both presence and representation. For representations are not simply less real than what they represent; they are also real in that 'representations are social facts'. They are not, in other words, just representations, but presences. They are part of ourselves.
- 15:** That if there were not art, the world would be only world and have another Model of Object of the Paradox.
- 16:** That, seen in this way, the self is not a perceived object, but a mental object created by an organizational operation on a stream of impressions, which, per se, lack this organization.

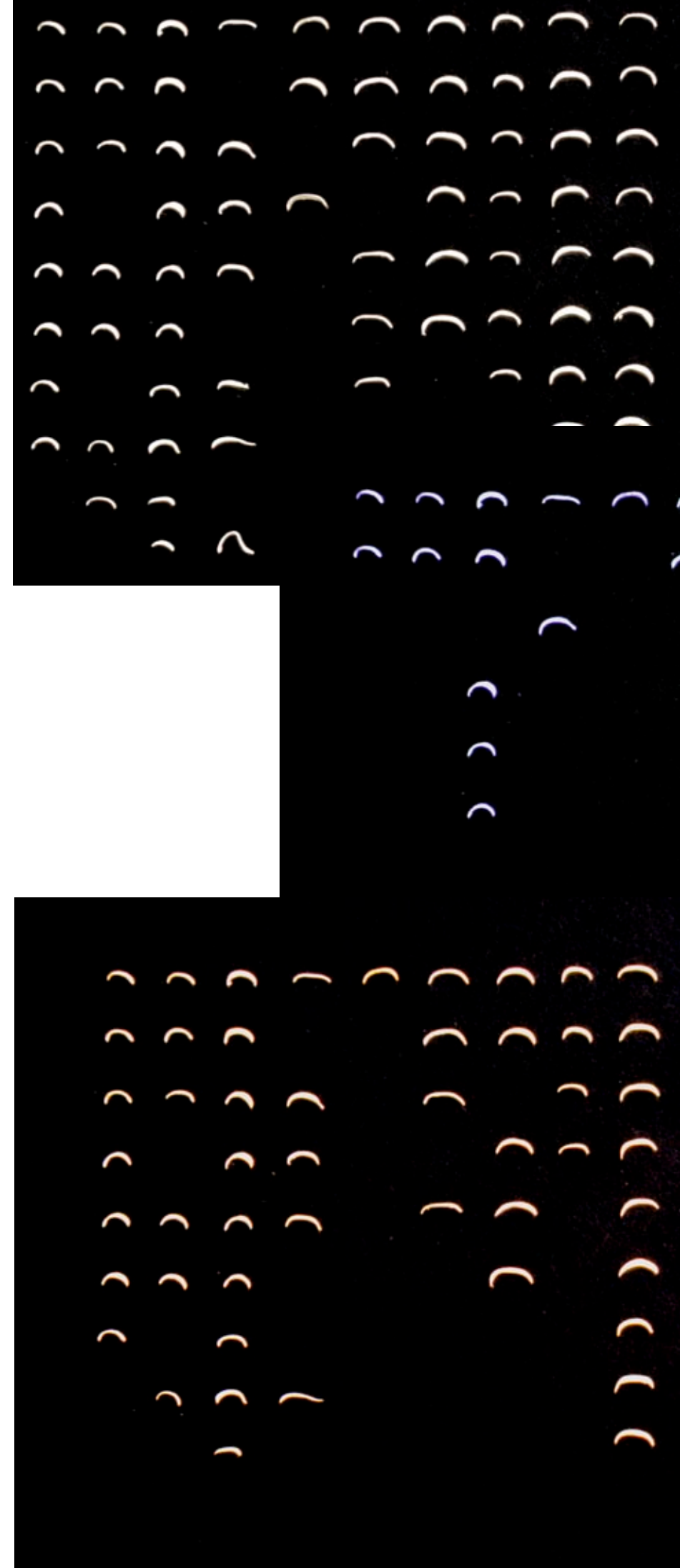
From somewhere in the periphery year 2000

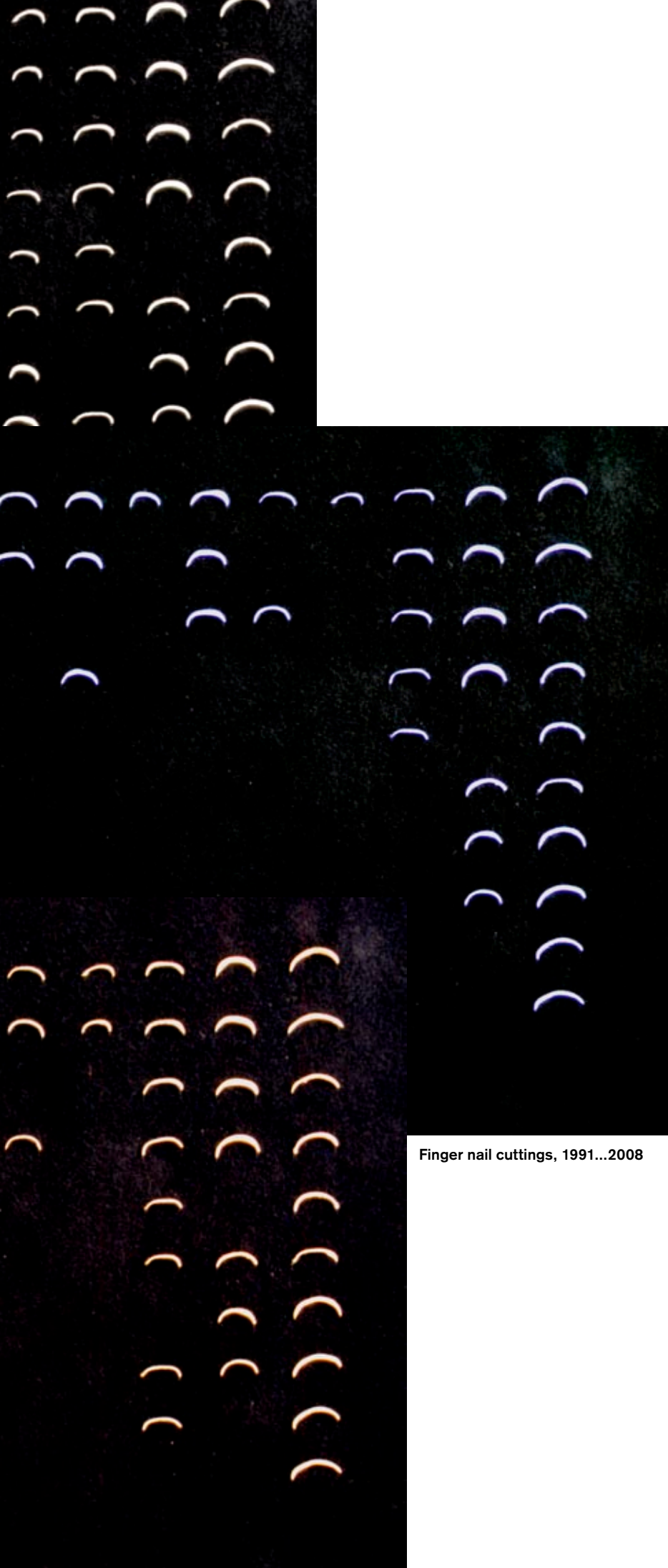
SELF, KARMA, AND POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

1 Communiqué of the PCLA (r)

The Post-Colonial Liberation Army (rematerialización) imparts:

- 1:** that as capital tends to deterritorialize, being profit and actual political control the place from where its identity develops, in the same way, in the world of art, power tends to branch out allowing for new configurations;
- 2:** that the Christian presently known as Saint Nicholas, who would later be identified with Santa Claus, was born in Patara, a harbour in Asia Minor (nowadays in Turkey) in the year of 265, that passed away in 334, and that his remains were stolen and taken to Bari (now in Italy) in 1087;
- 3:** that in 1087, the city of Bari was suffering a recession after the Norman invasion, and that to overcome its crisis it needed to re-profile its identity in some way;
- 4:** that at the time, the possession of relics of the saints generated great prestige and that Saint Nicholas was particularly well reputed, owing to the miracles he was held responsible for, and to other miracles attributed to him but actually worked by a bishop of the same region and same name but later date;
- 5:** that the apparent social mobility within the international systems of art seems whimsical or incoherent because there is neither central instance, nor political platform to lend them cohesion artistic strategy, as there are, similarly, no central instances regulating circulation and investment of financial capital;
- 6:** that, as it was stated by other organizations for more than fifteen years ago, the mobility of investment capital creates areas of wealth (and thus, power centra) within the former peripheries, and areas of poverty (and thus, peripheries) within places traditionally considered as centra;
- 7:** that Nicholas was Bishop of Myra, in Asia Minor (present-day Turkey);
- 8:** that more than 400 churches in England were consecrated to him;
- 9:** that the situation is not easy, and will not become easier with time;
- 10:** that to have access to visibility in central instances is a question that may be related to certain political operations and economic investments, but that to achieve it is not easy;
- 11:** that in 1087 seventy sailors embarked in three ships in Bari, arriving at night to Asia Minor; that they broke into the grave of Nicholas and carried away most of his bones; that they returned, safe and sound, to Bari, where they were received as heroes; that this operation allowed Bari to regain the good reputation it had lost since the weakening of the Byzantine Empire; that Bari quickly raised a Romanic basilica to house Nicholas' remains; that some of Nicholas' remains still rest, since the XIth Century, in Turkey (then Myra); That Turkey presently claims the remains in Bari; that it is unlikely the Christians in Bari will assume the Turkish claims, adducing religious motives (Christians versus Muslims); that the remains of Saint Nicholas (Santa Claus) generate touristic interest in Europe and the USA, and that by the Romanic basilica, there is now an Orthodox chapel visited by Greek, Russian and Balkan pilgrims;
- 12:** that, each year, 100,000 tourists come to Bari to see the remains of Saint Nicholas;
- 13:** that Nicholas reckons miracles to his credit such as having secretly given money so that three sisters could pay dowries and marry, avoiding being sold into prostitution by their father;





Finger nail cuttings, 1991...2008

14: that another of Saint Nicholas' miracles was to have returned to life, safe and sound, the remains of three children who had been murdered, butchered and made into corned beef;

15: that the supremacy of painting within the discourse of contemporary art has sometimes been replaced by the supremacy of a certain post-Duchampian object of dubious mystery;

16: that another of Saint Nicholas' miracles was to have saved the life of three innocent soldiers, from being decapitated by a judge's order;

17: that everything that happens is certain;

18: that another of the identitary fusions attributed to Saint Nicholas is related to certain attributes of the figure of the Germanic god Odin, and that a group of French nuns, inspired by the story of the children made into corned beef, secretly started, in the XIIth Century, to make presents to poor families in the Day of Saint Nicholas (December 5th);

19: that at the moment of drawing up this communiqué, the price of a two-litres' bottle containing a liquid seeping from the grave of Saint Nicholas in Bari equals two hundred dollars;

20: that the presence of art experts of peripheral origins (Mosquera, Havana; Herkenhoff, Brazil; Nittve, Sweden; Owkry, Nigeria; etc.) within power centra (New Museum and Museum of Modern Art in New York, Tate Modern in London and Dokumenta in Germany, etc.), teaches us that in the power centra there are new art experts;

21: that the tradition of making gifts (bread, fish, meat and spirits) in the Day of Saint Nicholas to poor students, appeared in England also during the XIIth Century;

22: that the Protestant Reformation condemned the practice of making gifts, which were, though, preserved by the Dutch emigrants to the Americas;

23: that Evolutionism is the theoretical space of contemporary industrial society;

24: that the theory of avant-gardes is a theoretical project of the élites of the art systems;

25: that Saint Nicholas is called Sinter Claes in Dutch;

26: that, in 1931, American artist of Brazilian origin Haddon Sundblom designed the clothing of Santa Claus with the colours of Coca-Cola, propitiating the consumption of the beverage even in cold climate places;

27: present expansion of the Guggenheim Museums: Guggenheim New York Uptown; Guggenheim New York SoHo; Guggenheim Venice; Guggenheim Japan; Guggenheim Germany; Guggenheim Spain; Guggenheim Brazil;

28: that it has always been said that Saint Nicholas clothing included animal furs, perhaps because of syncretic phenomena associating him to shamanic figures;

29: that access to information is no longer useful as regulating element of access to the centre, but that taste, as element of value judgement of an art project's quality, fulfils well this function;

30: that the clothing of Saint Nicholas, before becoming red as the Coca-Cola, had been green, blue, or altogether and exclusively composed of animal furs;

31: that Puerto Rico and Costa Rica are countries relatively near and different; that Sweden and Switzerland are countries relatively near and different; that Uruguay and Paraguay are countries relatively near and different, that the theory of the alternatives and underground movements is a theoretical project ensuring the renewal and survival of the élites of the art systems;

32: that, looked at in a mirror, the cultural body of a nation or of any social group is reflected as a perceptible unit;

33: that the value assigned to an art project, subordinated to a system that categorizes it, endows the art project with functional coherence;

34: that, few minutes after being born, Nicholas started to pray and told the midwife that Wednesdays, Fridays and other sacred dates, he would drink milk only once a day;

Executive Committee of the PCLA (r)

POST-COLONIAL LIBERATION ARMY (rematerialización)

PCLA (r)

1. censored communiqué

- 1: The PCLA (r) is not avant-garde;
- 2: The PCLA (r) is not non-avant-garde;
- 3: The PCLA (r) will not commit the imprudence of being rearguard, mass-
- 4: The PCLA (r) knows not what it wants, but knows who it is;
- 5: The PCLA (r) is anonymous;
- 6: The PCLA (r) does not get bored;
- 7: entertains;
- 8: The PCLA (r) does not assume its deep part to be unconscious;
- 9: The PCLA (r) is a social product;
- 10: The PCLA (r) does not assume other ethics than that of negotiated integrity;
- 11: The PCLA (r) is neither more nor less worthy than any of its communiqués;
- 12: The PCLA (r) is also its circumstance;
- 13: The PCLA (r) neither denies nor affirms the importance of the self;
- 14: The PCLA (r) commits the imprudence of noisiness;
- 15: The PCLA (r) is not cool;
- 16: The PCLA (r) fights the romanticism as analytic alternative and defends its analysis formally represented through elements from Conceptualism;
- 17: The PCLA (r) does not dream with awakening;
- 18: The PCLA (r) proposes to defend any issue regarding integrity through the formula: negotiation;
- 19: The PCLA (r) pronounces against ne-
contradiction, exclusion or disappearance (material, physical, ideological or emotional) of the other, whoever may be;
- 20: The PCLA (r) categorically opposes self-affirmation by means of the mechanisms exposed above;
- 21: The PCLA (r) understands that conditions are ripe for its functioning;
- 22: The PCLA (r) understands that the presence of noisiness is neither inimical nor contradictory to the just use of the means;
- 23: The PCLA (r) does not oppose the description of the self as a received experience;
- 24: The PCLA (r) would not exist if the conditions were other;
- 25: The PCLA (r) is not art;
- 26: The PCLA (r) does not propose symbiosis;
- 27: The PCLA (r) is not a reading of reality;
- 28: The PCLA (r) is not here to stay;
- 29: The PCLA (r) understands that language is both tool and space of its political action;
- 30: The PCLA (r)





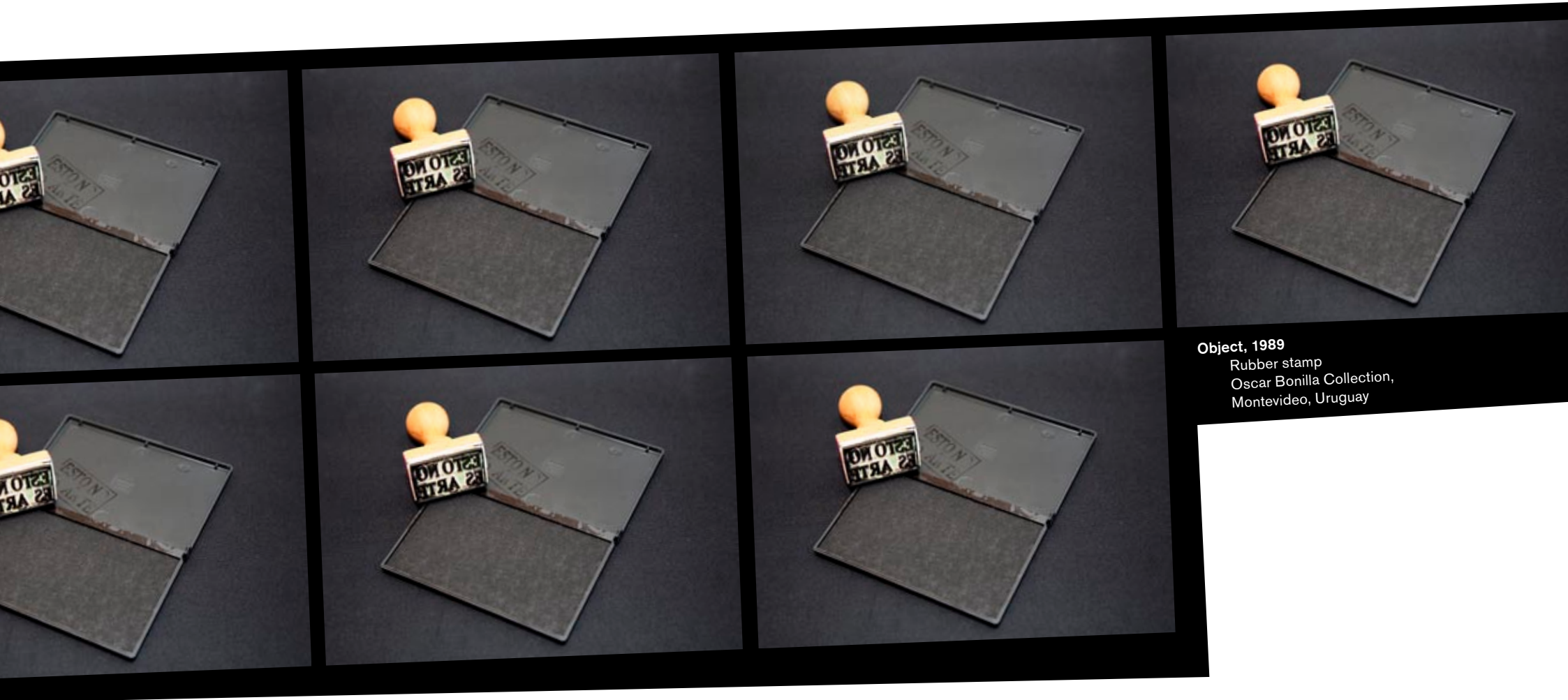
Installation, 1994
Museo Galego de Arte Contemporáneo,
GGAC's Collection, Santiago de Compostela, Spain

POST-COLONIAL LIBERATION ARMY
(rematerialización)

PCLA (r)
2. second proclamation

States:
That if the PCLA (r) should be dismembered into all its constituting parts, if it were deprived of its leadership, of its social base, of its communications network, of the ideology it does not assume but it is attributed; if it were to be divided into parts, one by one, intending to ascertain what it is composed of, if its functioning structure should be analysed, as well as its information, its strategic and tactical analysis, its economic organization and its propaganda apparatus; if its activists were persecuted, as well as its leadership, its social mass, its peripheral sympathizers, the PCLA (r) would continue to exist and would go on functioning as it has done until now;

PCLA (r) Provincial Committee



Object, 1989
Rubber stamp
Oscar Bonilla Collection,
Montevideo, Uruguay

POST-COLONIAL LIBERATION ARMY
(rematerialización)

3. Third proclamation and summons.
The PCLA (r) wonders.

The PCLA (r) proclaims that the PCLA (r)
is its circumstance.
Therefore, the PCLA (r) summons:

- 1: to carefully analyse all that happens;
- 2: to pay attention to each day's experience;
- 3: to abstract and concretize to surmount the spirit-matter contradiction;
- 4: to rematerialise the world;
- 5: to cast doubt on the snares of the senses;
- 6: to cast doubt on the snare of intellect;
- 8: to cast doubt on the snare of the avant-gardes;
- 9: to cast doubt on the snare of silence;
- 10: to cast doubt on the snare of the images;
- 11: to cast doubt on everything that cannot be recounted;
- 12: to cast doubt on impotence and arrogance;
- 13: to cast doubt on language;
- 14: to cast doubt on power;
- 15: to cast doubt on neglect and history;
- 16: to cast doubt on victory;
- 17: to cast doubt on all technology that would not consider an ethics of the responsibility towards all that is known, or that would not consider the relationship between means and ends as a political fact;
- 18: to cast doubt on nourishment;
- 19: to cast doubt on time, cynicism and intransigence;
- 20: to doubt without worries;

Therefore, the PCLA (r) wonders:

- a: are we ready to live in a world full of art objects?
- b: are we prepared to see art into each and all of the manifestations that call themselves art?
- c: do we want to assume as avant-garde those art objects proposed as a reading that is new, different, more original,

- more lucid, creative, more contemporary than the others?
- d: is bisexuality an expansion of the perception of the sexual?
- e: would a life without forgiveness be endurable?
- f: can we conceive of things without a precise origin?
- g: are we interested in that our values be respected, as other of our attributes are respected?
- h: will we assume psychoanalysis as a way of interpreting our desires of culturally sublimating ourselves?
- i: will the PCLA (r) be able to assume spiritual responsibility for an ever more lay society?
- j: will installation be the fitting method?
- k: will the creation of an alternative mainstream be the historical rubbish dump of our desires?
- l: will it be possible to empty painting from its auratic contents?
- m: will we denounce the anonymity of auteur works?
- n: do natives have a soul? or, is this a pipe?
- o: once our dissidence is stated, will we expand the notion and functionality of culture or art?
- p: is it necessary to be sensual to be Brazilian?
- q: did the figures from the palaeolithic represent the aspirations of a hunter people?
- r: is it possible to socially organize a series of interesting questions regarding the situation of the world and of things?

Without delay! To work!
PCLA (r)

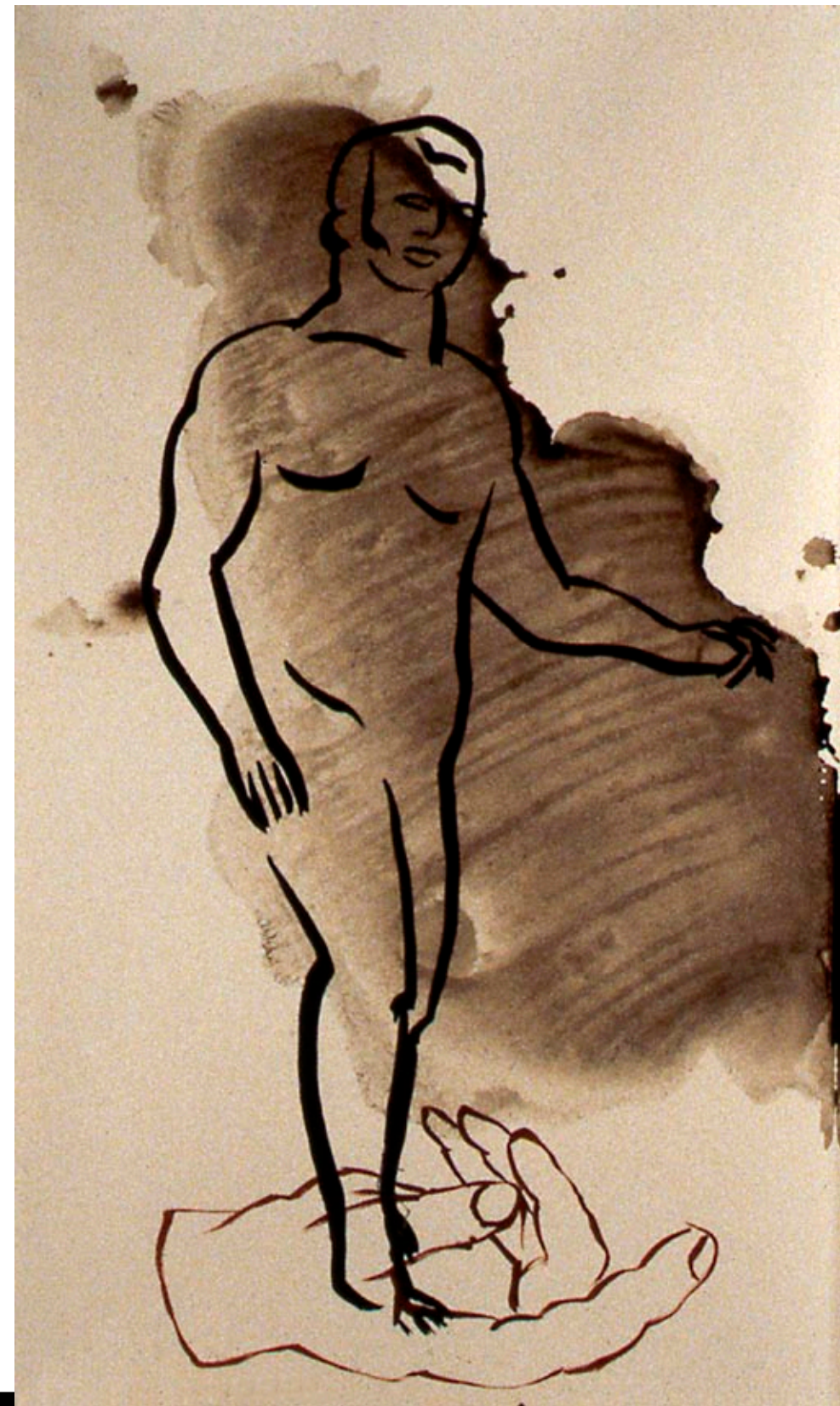
ETHICS AND THE OTHERS

4. Fourth Proclamation (Research to one's own advantage)

- 1.- The PCLA(r) states that everything I like is good
- 2.- the PCLA(r) defends that everything good for the PCLA(r) is also good for the lower middle class, for the immigrants, the unemployed, for culture, economy, the "chic" museums' system, non-professional artists, alternative people, historical artists, for the aesthetics, the ethics, the leisure industry, for the free circulation of ideas, for the stimulation of the economy, and also holds that everything pleasing to the PCLA(r) is good for everyone in general
- 3.- the PCLA(r) affirms that every artistic act is a social action traditionally legitimated by the gestuality of individual freedom, which has nothing to do with either good or bad faith
- 4.-the PCLA(r) accuses as pampered every ethic or aesthetic gaze which does not assume the consequences of deconstruction
- 5.- the PCLA(r) denounces that art, having no ends or intentions, carries in its muddy waters the slime and embarrassment of the sediments of bad and good faith, of karma, of the rules of language, of the logic of supply and demand, and of the glory of the productive forces, whose will makes symbolic production into a relatively believable fact
- 6.- the PCLA(r) does not deny or affirm the study of what is good, nor pretends to procure it, nor questions the good intentions of the correct action, of the incorrect action or of the spectacular ethical action. The PCLA(r) minds its own business. Lives and lets live. The PCLA(r) does affirm that the ethical provocation is present in the messianic vocation of a narcissistic and insecure middle class who would portray itself as vanguard (* see authoritarian paragraphs)

* Authoritarian paragraphs to point #6:

- a): the middle class is narcissistic, insecure, normative and would portray itself as contemporary vanguard
- b): the middle class is politically opportunist, culturally normative and ethically coward
- c): the middle class does not aspire, today, to objectives of progress and economic accommodation as an ethical end, but to elitist (and in good faith) symbolic transcendence, and gladly sends its children to study at art schools
- d): the middle class rebels today against its former sanctimoniousness and assumes relative ethical values to help in renegotiating its elite opportunism
- e): the middle class is, today, art producer in its capacity of main consumer of museum goods
- f): the middle class wants to win, holds a grudge and is angry
- f:a): the middle class is not what it used to be
- g): the vanguard of the middle class is bigger than your vanguard
- h): the middle class pretends things are hot because things got hot for the middle class
- i): in what hotel do the globalized hide?



Drawing, from the Rorschach series, 1991
Red ochre, soil and Indian ink on paper, 64 x 75 cm



7.- the PCLA(r) recognizes that it is possible to assume power as the only real thing and as source of stoic pleasure; the PCLA(r) has nightmares and remorse which, sadly, affect the quality of its ethical judgements and, at nights, two white unicorns appear to the PCLA(r), one called Anythinggoes and the other Theendjustifiesthemeans, both of them singing a light and catchy tune inciting me to sign all the works of art, to sacrifice myself for my career, to suffer as a result of fame or lack thereof, and to add even more objects to a world already full of objects, full of objects, full of objects, full of objects

8.- the PCLA(r) laments its inexplicable romanticism by which it would pretend that the way to make a work of art should be, come rain or shine, constitutive and inseparable part of that work of art

9.- the PCLA(r) dreams of not escaping into the future

10.- the PCLA(r) recognizes its imbecility in thinking that to go no further is the only vanguard possible to it

11.- the PCLA(r) estimates that, probably, contemporary art will not need to formulate its own relationship to ethics, but (perhaps) to take into account that ethics is a political context of the contemporary

12.- the PCLA(r) believes it has arguments to say that, notwithstanding our purpose to work for conscience or thoughtlessness, the risk always exists of preaching or of giving oneself to the pragmatism of pleasure without need of confronting the consequences. The PCLA(r) makes no difference between representation and praxis, nor believes in quality criteria, given that art is a system producing objects (these being dematerialized or not), which may lead to believe that an art object is ostensibly different from an exhibition curator, whereas they actually both dance the same art perception mambo. Thus, the PCLA(r) wonders if ethics would be an attribute or an intrinsic quality of the actions composing our lives

13.- the PCLA(r) has reliable information that, in many cases, it is possible to cast the stone and hide the hand. The body does not begin at the centre and end at paring my nails. Every other is there even though my eyes may not see them. The objects in the mirror are closer than they seem. Narcissus, Epicure or the Stoics. Everything that happens is true, but some things have more reality than others. I cannot waste more time in this. The systems. Now or never!

14.- the PCLA(r) runs this research to its own advantage

**In good faith, from the black horizons of the Galician seas!
For everybody's advantage!**

Post Colonial Liberation Army (rematerialización)

WE ARE DEPENDENT

5. Fifth Proclamation of the PCLA (r)

The PCLA (r) upholds that the museum, that the institutions, that the museums, that the museums devoted or dedicated to Contemporary Art (not valid)

The PCLA (r) is compelled by the circumstances to pronounce on contemporary art museums and the narcissist identitary politics projected on the activity of contemporary art. In this respect, the Post Colonial Liberation Army (rematerialización) upholds:

- 1:** that no institution devoted to contemporary art is fit to define what art is, or what makes one thing more contemporary than another;
- 2:** that, under an appearance of theoretical porosity, these institutions are governed by solid pragmatic principles;
- 3:** that if these institutions have today difficulties in managing aesthetics, they are, on the other hand, highly qualified to manage other kinds of categories;
- 4:** that my avant-garde is bigger than yours;
- 5:** that the museums are institutions devoted to the praxis of autist self-portrait;
- 6:** that the artists do not exist;
- 7:** that neither does art, only its praxis;
- 8:** that the National State ethnifies: the Family of Man, Modernism and Post-modernity, the notion of the Contemporary, Geography, Flora and Fauna, the ownership of the Picassos, the Alterity that justifies and upholds its Autist Self-portrait and Creative Freedom;
- 9:** that globalization is not round like a globe; that the perception of the “multi-cultural” is more effective when done from the Renaissance central perspective; that it is not certain that the mere economic inversion would allow access to the mainstream of contemporary culture; that this is not a text; that any object exposed in a vitrine acquires the peculiarity of catching our attention for a moment; that our attention is fragmentary;
- 10:** that the new underwear design market does not have as its object the expansion of either the notion or the function of art;
- 11:** that the flows of capital, information, technology, products and people characterizing the so-called globalization process, release forces which, in themselves, have no a priori ethic intention, wherefore concepts as ethnification, plurality, inclusion, exclusion, innovation, repetition, accumulation or fascination may play roles both progressive and conservative depending on subjective conditions in specific contexts;
- 12:** that even though art is part of the symbolic production of our times, its products function as both quantitative and qualitative categories;

13: that alterity is another of the resources for renovation of the avant-garde of the New Global Middle Class;

14: France, one point; la Suède, un point; le Portugal, um ponto; Deutschland, ein und fünfzig; etc...

15: that multiculturalism and globalization are not enough for New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and the River Plate to communicate horizontally;

16: that in contemporary society the notion of social groups with common interests transcends the limits traditionally defined by national state; that as capital tends to draw transnational strategies, and as contemporary art's system of education, production and distribution grows more international, postmodern youngsters and adults also are disposed and ready to defend their museums, galleries, grants, critics, pencils, round tables, passepartouts, rulers, draughtman's squares, digital videos, watercolours, genome maps, erasers, collections, easels, postduchampian traditions and their favourite curators against all not immersed in the precise space of the contemporary;

17: that it is false that the notion of contemporaneity in art fulfils a homogenizing function in contradiction with the plural vocation of the present;

18: that all those excluded from social representation in the institutions devoted to contemporary art do not necessarily stay in the same hotel (it is not evident either that all those excluded aspire to harmony between body and soul);

19: that revisionism is a political condition of history; so is seduction;

20: that p-p-p-possibly nothing of the aforesaid f-f-f-faithfully expresses the desires and aspirations of the excluded, the excluders, the devoted or the enemies of the mainstream of art, nor any other issue or p-p-p-position of people or groups related to culture produced in our days;

21: that it is false, of absolute falsity, what it is said that there is not one system of contemporary cultural production but several, and that it is impossible to uphold the affirmation that: “there is no generic contemporary culture but a superstitious desire of the same, fragmented into a thousand different praxis and three thousand activities of diverse urgency which the PCLA (r) neither attends to nor understands properly”, and before which the PCLA (r) wonders with the same wonderment a child wonders before the wonder of each day with the same wonderment a child wonders before the wonder of each day with the same wonderment a child wonders before the wonder of each day with the same wonderment.

For a better understanding of whom we are, wherefrom we come, what we want and where we go!

For a transparent contemporary art and with future!

For a just representation of diversity!

PCLA (r), Provincial Secretariats

Autonomous Commission for Contemporary Cultural Managementx



Map of San José
(Homage to Sol
Lewitt), 1999–2004
 Installation
 Todo Incluido, Centro cultural Conde
 Duque, Madrid, Spain



§ GAME RULES

The Alter Ego Popular Faction (AEPF, also known as The Dissidence) of the Post Colonial Liberation Army (rematerialización) warns of the dangers of cultural isolation and calls together to an interregional symposium where the eventual dangers of such a symposium should be discussed and incentivated.

As convocation methodology it proposes the exclusion from the symposium of all those communities sharing the same continental space, the same dominant ethnic group or the same majority language.

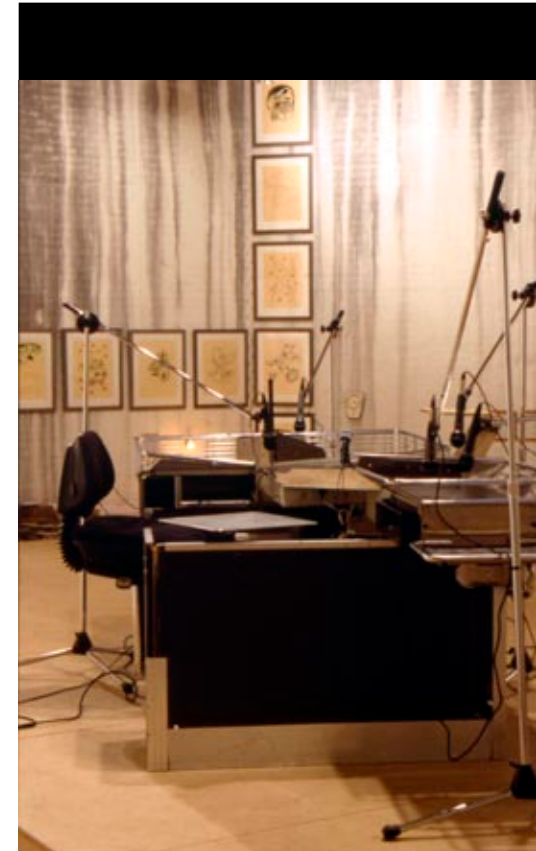
Among the resulting communities, those conflating the greater possible diversity of common and/or different factors will be given priority.

The AEPF declares that it would probably be a good idea to steer the symposium towards pragmatic celebration.

Therefore, the AEPF proposes a symposium in the form of a football tournament transcending any linear antagonism and proposing a healthy praxis of sporting justice, or pop concert excluding the use of microphones, electric guitars or blue jeans.

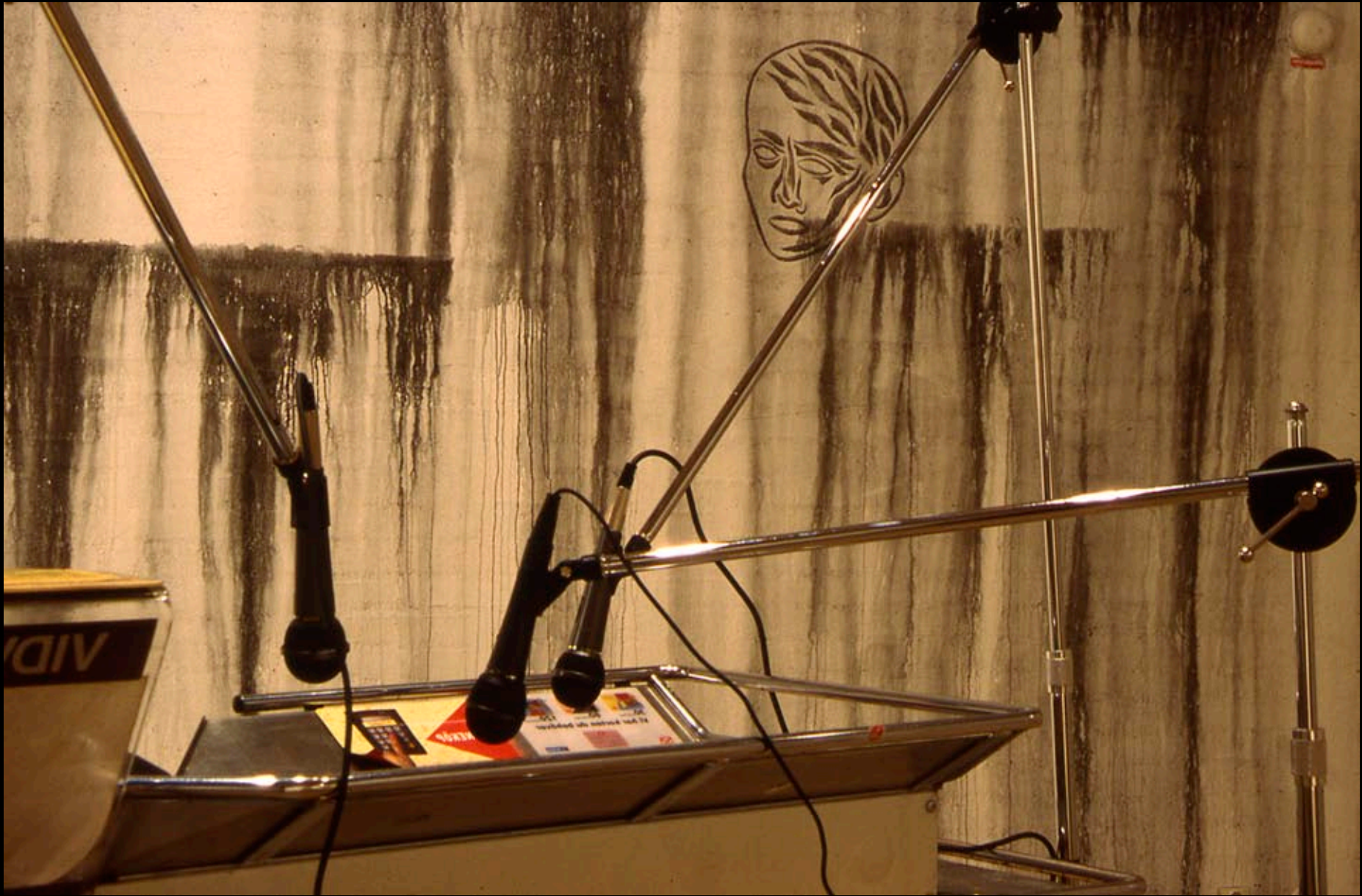
In consequence, and in case the symposium would be decanted by the celebration of a football tournament, the AEPF forwards for consideration a collection of general rules for the tactical-strategical redefinition of the king of sports:

- a) that three teams should participate in the matches, two of which will try to win against each other while the third will have the function of hindering their play;
- b) if one of the two rival teams should be winning against the other, the function of the third one will be to support the losing team until equalizing the result;
- c) that the rival teams will field as many players as there are minutes in each playing period;
- d) the teams will withdraw a player every two minutes of each period and in an order provisionally stipulated by decision of one of the spectators chosen at random;
- e) the matches will be played on a standard field for this sport and in the deepest semi-darkness possible;
- f) the players will avail themselves of two flashlights each which they will switch on or off at their discretion and whim;
- g) two balls of different colours will be used;
- h) all the teams will play equally and indiscriminately with any of these balls;
- i) refereeing will be the task of the third-team player closest to the play, who will administer justice with the greatest cogency and criterion;
- j) the duration of the matches will be: a first period of 15 minutes, a second one of 42 minutes, a third friendly period of ten minutes (in which goals will not be counted) and a fourth period of a flexible half-hour;
- k) the intervals will be resting periods of the duration of a light afternoon meal determined by consensus among the minors among the spectators;
- l) the final result of the match will be determined by vote among all those participating or spectating the event (spectators, players, technical and all service staff included);
- m) this result will be made public by all means at hand within 45 days but not before one month of the event;
- n) etcetera



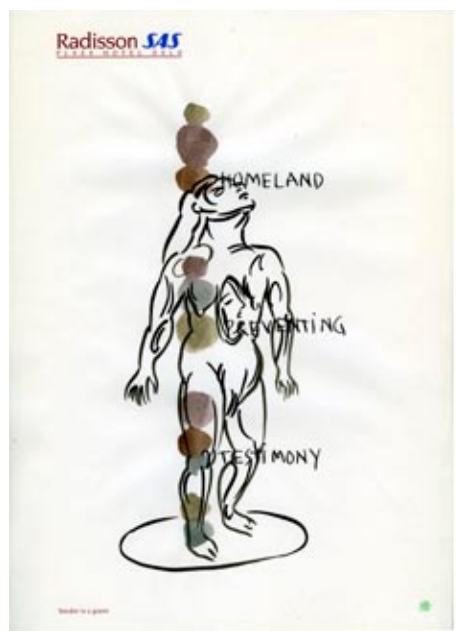
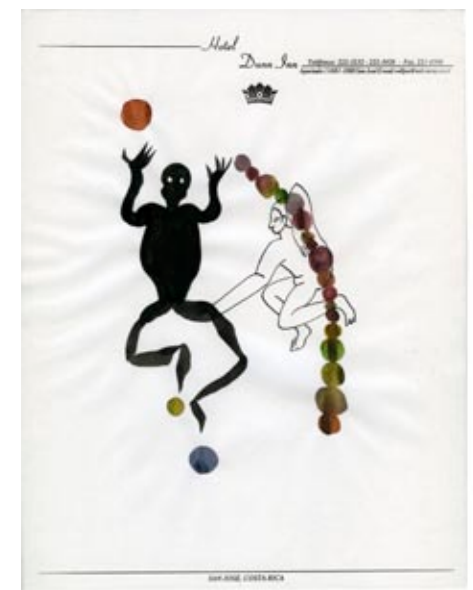
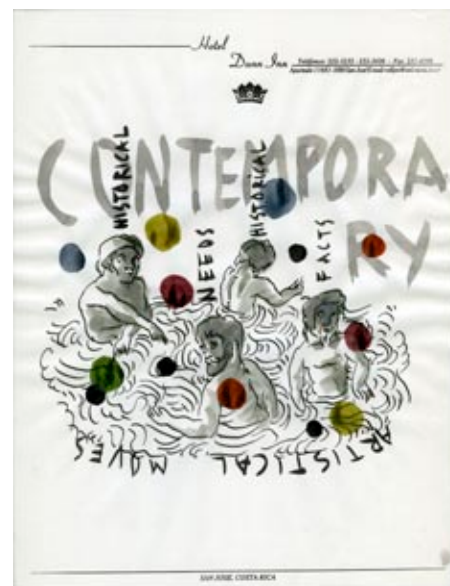
The Sleep of Reason, 1996

Installation, supermarket counter,
microphones, speakers, etc
Five Gardens, Valfisken, Simrishamn,
Sweden









FRAGMENTS OF A CONVERSATION

Annika Capelán Köhler in conversation with Carlos Capelán

Displacement.

Carlos Capelán: ...Yes, travelling has always been an issue for me. I find four different moments in relation to my travelling. It first started when I left home at the age of 19 and hiked around South America from 1969 to 1971. That was an experience that really changed my life. A couple of years later I was forced into exile. That was an extreme social experience. The third moment started during the mid '80s when, because of my artistic practice, I had to travel to different venues. The fourth and most unexpected moment was when I discovered that my family, many of my close friends and colleagues and myself - we were all living in many places, speaking many different tongues. In all, there have been personal decisions as well as situations forced upon me. In that sense, to me travelling has meant discovering new homes, going back home, missing home and being located, de-located and relocated many times around.

...What is also displaced today are old social patterns, language, people, travelling itself and no doubt, power. Take for instance the old paradigm of the art system. I don't think we have one art system today, but many, and they collaborate, fight and ignore each other. The old hegemony has been displaced and several new ones are emerging distinctively. Even if there are old and new powerful cultural enterprises, these are in no condition to entirely control what is going on within all the art systems. Both the art piece, the position of the artist and of the audience, the gaze of the connoisseur and the administration of aesthetics, all of this has been de-located.

Annika Capelán Köhler: In relation to the situation that you describe here, what would in your opinion, be the meaning of place and of encounter?

C: It is an imponderable¹. Language is a meeting place. A few weeks ago I was in Rome. Speaking Italian gave me a very nice feeling of belonging. Now, teaching in Swedish to some of my Norwegian students in Bergen, implies both similarity and difference. And I had a most interesting experience at the beginning of the '80 with Rhazaly, my neighbour at the time, a political refugee in Sweden originally from the Chinese minority of Malaysia, and a PhD in Social Sciences. For a couple of years we took turns inviting each other to dinner. Whilst cooking we would have serious conversations about art, history, social science, geopolitics, and more. He managed to explain to me how he perceived Marxism and Psychoanalysis as being the most recent Western tools used to colonize Asia. The conversations were mostly in English but also in Swedish. He had not spoken his mother tongue for nine years. Although conversation was crucial, eating was not less important. We had made a deal saying that each time we met for dinner one of us had to invite the other with some vernacular dish. Talking and eating were both acts of negotiation performed in a third and a fourth tongue and in a faraway geography. I would like to call that a meeting. And I would like to call it travelling as well. And, I would call that relationship a place.

A: It definitely sounds like an encounter that happens through the needs and intentions that you both put into it. My question then is about the times when these encounters do not happen. As I see it, contemporary dynamics are many times about avoidance and non-meeting.

C: Now that you mention that, let me tell you about my personal experiences of meetings and non-meetings. As so many others I have found myself in many different situations: I have probably been a bum, I have worked in factories, supermar-

¹ Imponderable: unable to be weighed or assessed -something difficult or impossible to assess.

kets, plantations, a nuclear plant, kindergartens, restaurants and shops. I have been a politically persecuted person, I am also a father and a neighbour, a professor, a friend and I have become “an international contemporary artist”, whatever that could be. It is in this last category that I have met most clearly both attitudes: the will of meeting and the rejection of it. As any other definition of identity, the space of the contemporary activates both mechanisms of inclusion and of exclusion within the art practice.

Unfortunately, I am convinced that the notion of the contemporary is often used as a tool to create a détente with power. Furthermore, I would dare to say that this notion is a projection of desires and needs onto a historical stream that we cannot fully grasp (but oh boy! we have to grasp it anyway, my curator said...).

Being attuned with our historical times is good as long as this experience is not reduced to formulas. The sad news come when our need for self-reflection becomes a mere narcissistic self-portrait. The symbolic fades into easy formulas, into plain information or in the quick seduction of fresh gestures.

It seems as though some segments of our society, some attributes, some attitudes, some places and products are more contemporary than others. If the contemporary is a historical condition beyond mere self-definition or verbal construction, I find it very difficult to assert myself into a restricted version of it.

A: You talk about the contemporary as a category and I would like to link this to what you said about symbolic gestures. The contemporary art object can be seen as a gesture, and also as a social action. Here I refer to the old anthropological notion of objects as social beings, agents that act upon the world and around which life develops as social networks or social tissues. How can you relate to this way of considering the practice of producing art?

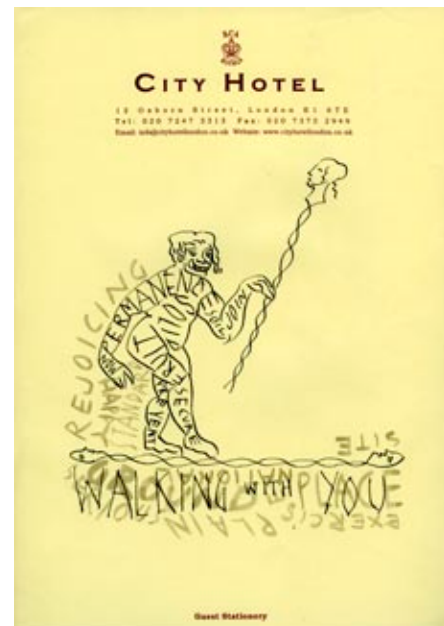
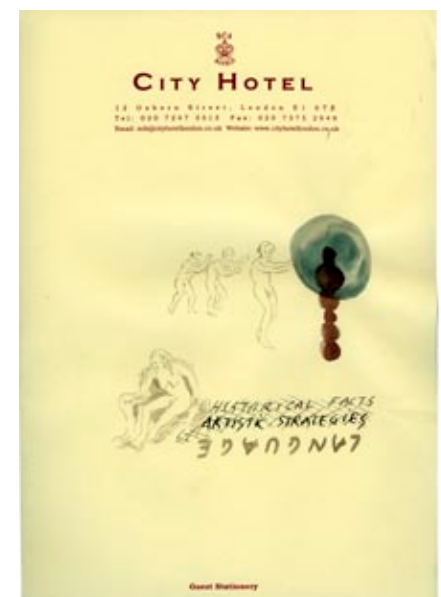
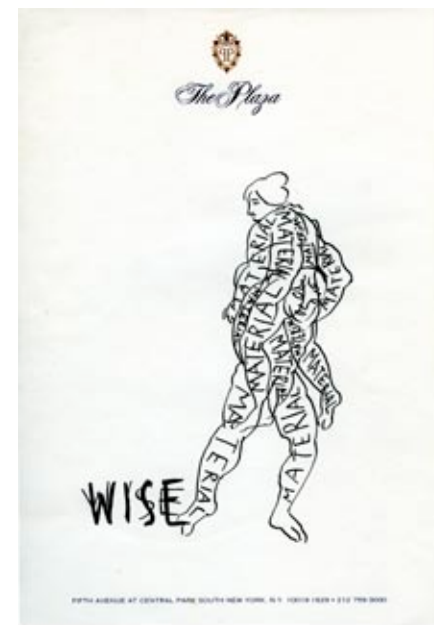
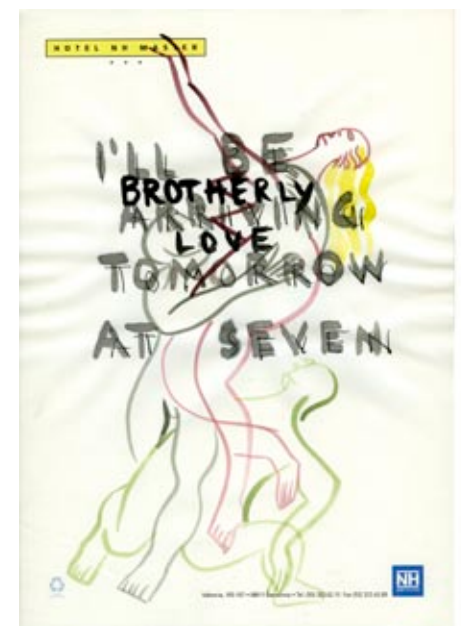
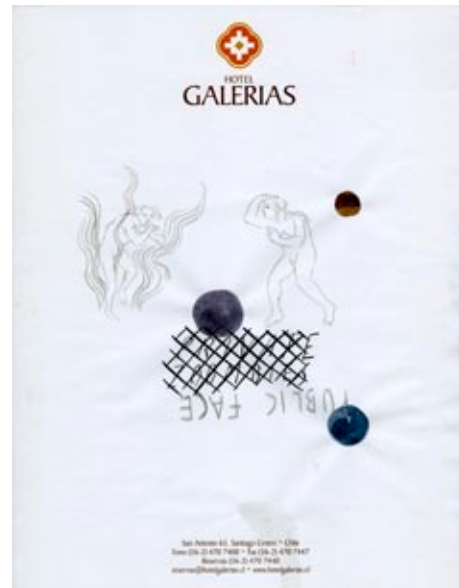
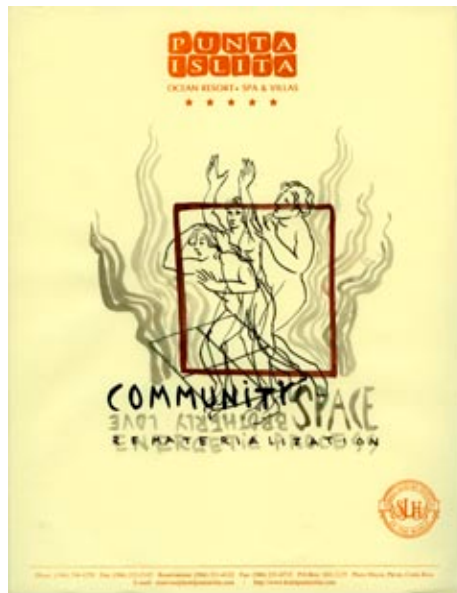
C: The conceptual artists' attempt to dematerialize the art object was an interesting one during the Sixties. Nowadays, I am busy trying to “rematerialize” the art experience. We cannot escape the material aspect of what we do since we have economically powerful mechanisms for the production and exhibition of art. But I think that reconsidering our perception of the material is a crucial cultural statement.

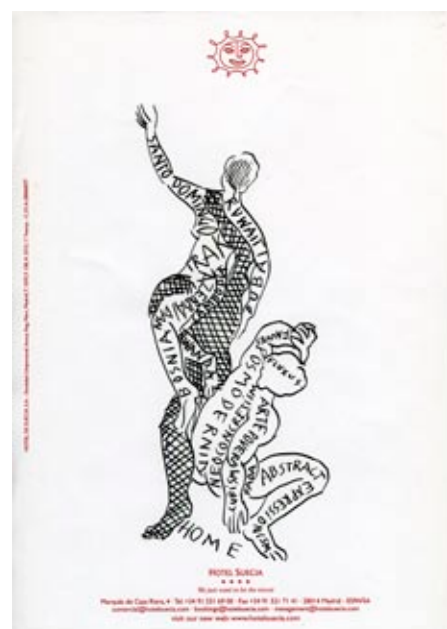
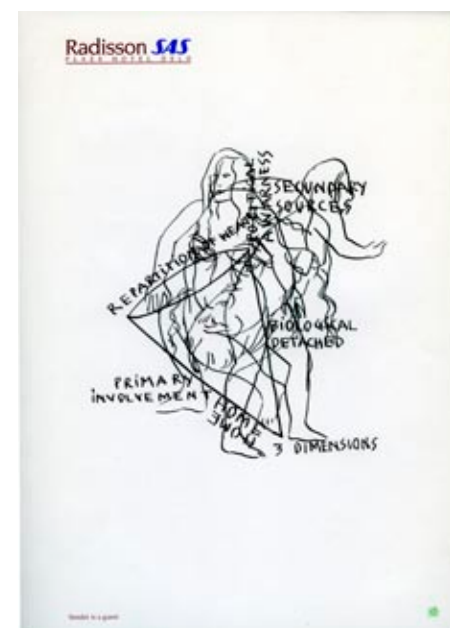
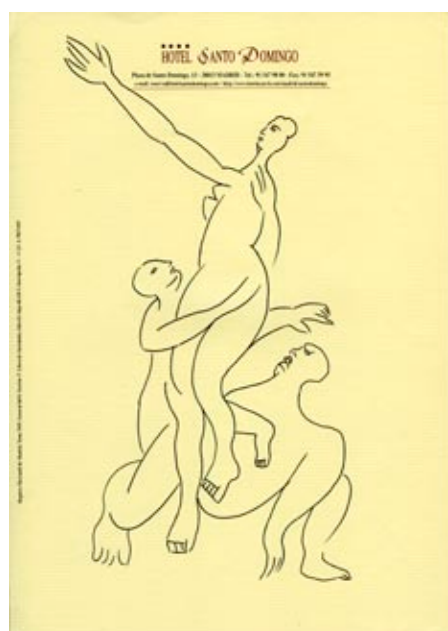
I agree with you that the art object could be seen as an agent. The deeper meaning of art probably happens in the space framed by the emission and the reception of it. The presence of the art institution and of the self of the artist also impregnates the whole experience. We live in an age of Hollywood-styled productions. The way we show an art project in terms of scale, economical investment, advertising, social aura etc. – all this determines the identity of the art project as an agent. The moment of production becomes a social gesture in itself. It's the dilemma when the aesthetics of production take over the production of aesthetics and meaning.

The Self

C: ...Some kind of self is always projected onto the art project. Whether there is a social, cultural or personal self, the projection is unavoidable. This mechanism is present even in the most impersonal aesthetics. There is never an objective gaze while producing and/or interpreting the art piece. Maybe we can avoid more subjective projections of the individual self, but we cannot avoid social projections. Language embodies society. Taste and form, whatever appearances, are rooted in us. A problem arises if we are not aware of the basic consequences of these projections.

Personally, I try to deal with these questions by working with a certain register of projections. For instance, if I cannot escape the erratic condition of being an individual artist – one that does put a signature on his work – then I will have to deal with





it and assume some kind of artistic identity. My own artistic self becomes a hook. But I have to ask myself: what kind of self is it that I am projecting through my work? And the true answer is that I'm not fully sure.

I myself enjoy working with a wide register of my so called personality: I like producing stupid things along with more clever ones, varying the formal and conceptual frames of the work, assuming cultural ideas and traditions of different origin but choosing to deal with sets of ideas and impressions that somehow might be connected. Porosity is a good reference when I think of my own identity. Porosity gives us a chance to attempt to deconstruct the artistic self we're constantly producing.

A: In a way you are talking about identity here. This is a theme that dominates both social and cultural discussions today.

C: I deal with the issue of identity because I deal with the issues of self. The self is, on a deeper level, at the very core of the idea of identity.

A: When you mention depth and deeper levels I know that you are aware of the ideas of art as something that deals with the questions that reason and intellect cannot handle – sometimes it is named emotions, sometimes we talk about creativity, or the subconscious, as though it was something exclusive to artistic behavior. All of these stereotypical notions of the realm of art have their historical backgrounds. How is it to embody them today?

C: In general terms? You mean how this is working within the art systems or do you mean how I deal with these issues in my work?

A: Of course I am interested in both. I understand that there are a lot of different kinds of beliefs and dispositions – what some anthropologists call habitus - in the art practice. I also

know that you have a strategy that allows you to be both active and passive at the same time; do you see what I mean?

C: I guess I do know what you mean.

To begin with, you know very well that I mistrust the notion of the subconscious.

But there are more myths to consider. Besides the stereotypical assumptions you mention, we have one very important modernist dead horse that we are still beating these days: the myth of the avant-garde. I distrust any notion of avant-garde. Yet, because of their strictly strategic needs of renewal, the mainstream structures promote it, explicitly or not. On a personal and a rather confused level, I try not to encourage the audience to perceive my work as connected to the simplistic, old fashioned, elitist, boring, militaristic idea of the avant-garde.

A: Yes, this certainly is about how you work. And maybe I should clarify, that when I ask about your or other artist's work, I do not only refer to the artwork produced but to the social activities around it. This, and what you say about avant-garde and how you approach the audience, makes me want to ask a question about language. How you talk, what you talk about, what you do not talk about, and also to whom you talk, are all very important and complicated themes in an art practice.

C: Yes, I agree. All of this is of importance. But these days I see many colleagues being a little bit too conscious about the mechanisms of emission and reception of their works. They know exactly what kind of impact their projects will achieve once produced. It's like they are too aware of what kind of product they are throwing to the market so that they can be at both ends at the same time.

Personally, I like to think that my “products” are still bi-products of a certain activity. I'm not trying to be a stand up come-

dian. And I'm not addressing a specific art audience. In other words, I wouldn't like to have one single strategy for how my work operates. I hope I'm answering your question. And finally, I'm not very fond of the idea of expanding any notion of art. After all art itself is a "found cultural object" (remember Duchamp?).

A: Well, I think that we are slowly working ourselves through quite a few questions simultaneously as we speak. And in the end we will probably have new ones hanging around, but that's part of a conversation, isn't it?

C: You keep on talking, dear...

Time

A: We have talked about the ideas of place and displacement, about meetings and encounters, about self and identity. We have mentioned the notion of the art practice and the bi-products of art, and we repeatedly return to the art systems, and the contemporary as a category. As the conversation is becoming both broad and fragmented I'd suggest that we connect it to something that appears to be a continuous comment on fragmentation in your actual work: the repetition of figures. By the end of the 80's you decided to work with a set of randomly selected images; figures that were to be repeated for a period of time of at least 10 years. What has happened since then? What did it give?

C: Now, that one appeared to be an important decision for me to take. At that time I wanted to deconstruct my "creative" identity since everybody seemed to appreciate and recognize my "personal style" of drawing. At the same time, a local Swedish art critic wrote that he appreciated the powerful expressions in my work, but he also said that I was unable to communicate my ideas since I didn't work within a "western conceptual frame". I found that statement to be really arrogant

and funny but also uninformed. Nevertheless I realized that I had to give even more visibility to a couple of paradoxes that I was addressing.

Repeating the same randomly selected images gave me the chance not only to deconstruct the idea of personal gesture, but also the assumption that artistic drawings have a fixed value, a fixed meaning. By working with the old traditions of style and personal artistic imaginary, I hoped I would somehow achieve the opposite: that is, the revision of the subjective self as the ultimate realm of "artistic creativity".

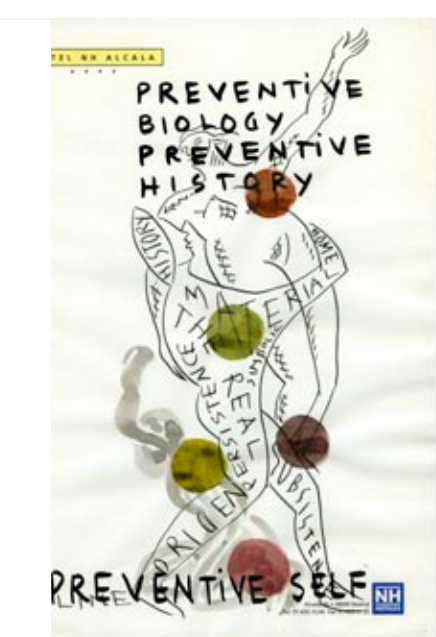
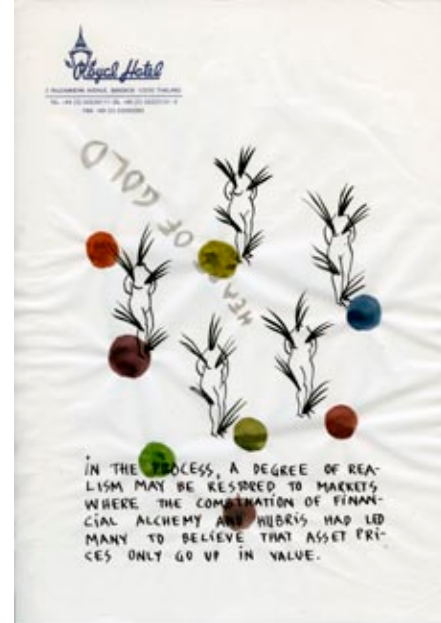
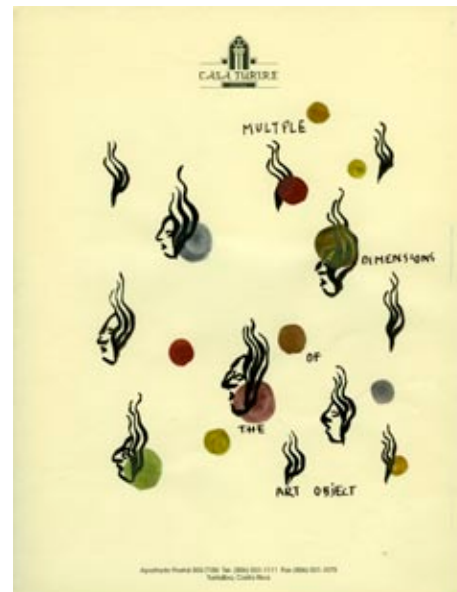
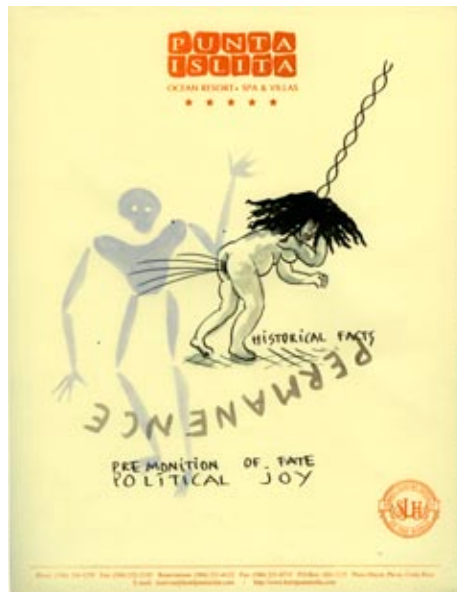
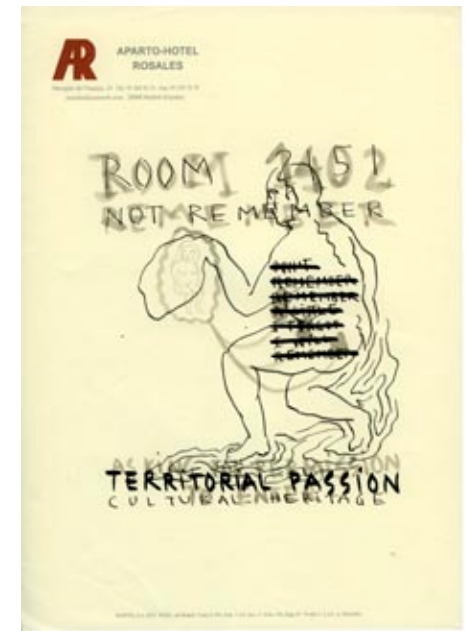
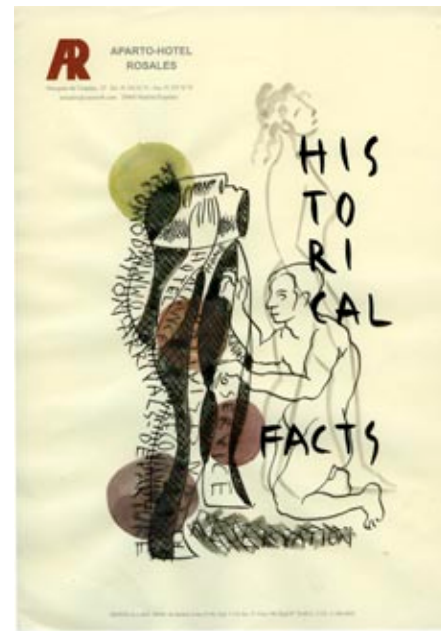
So, I went on repeating these figures in tiny little drawings, in paintings, in oversized versions and even in sculptures. The main idea was that the figures would get different meanings and would work in different ways depending on the contexts where they appeared.

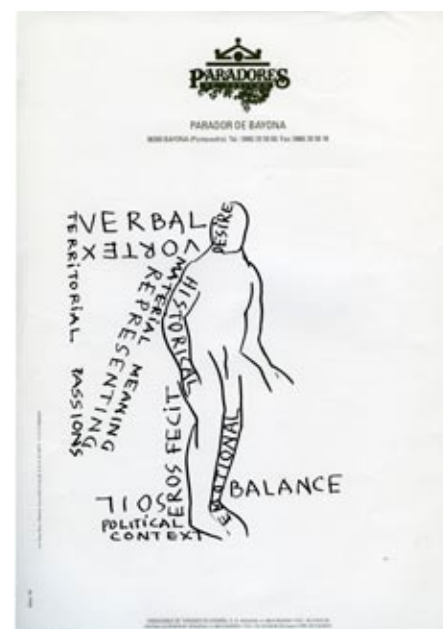
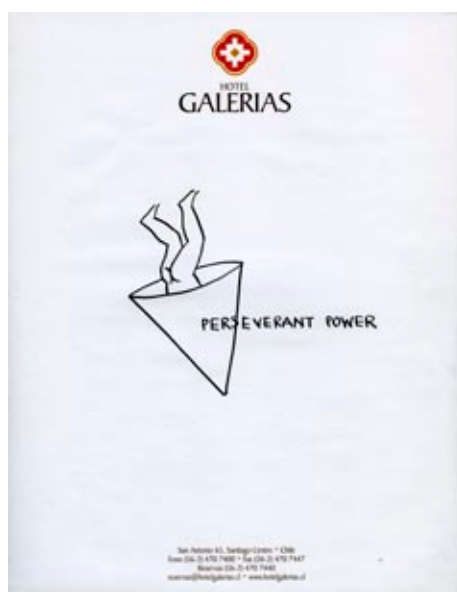
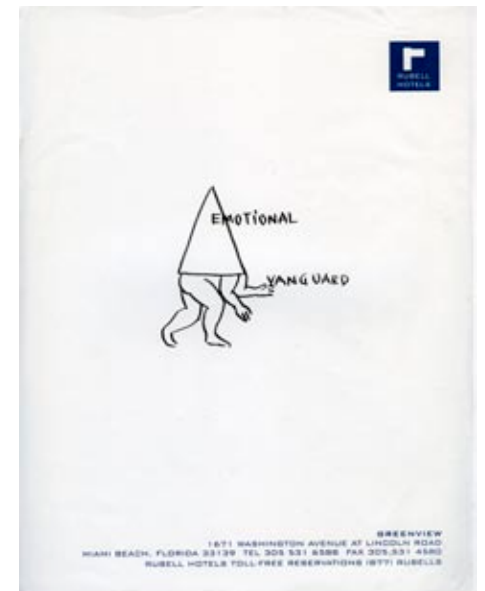
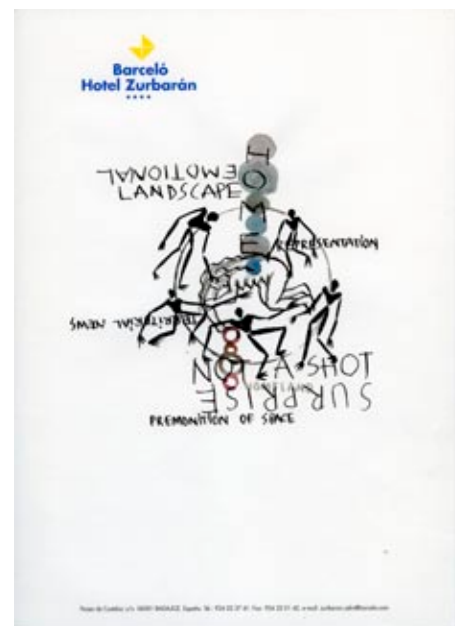
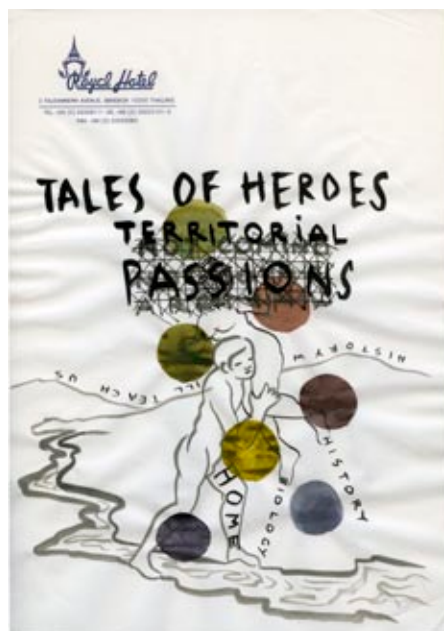
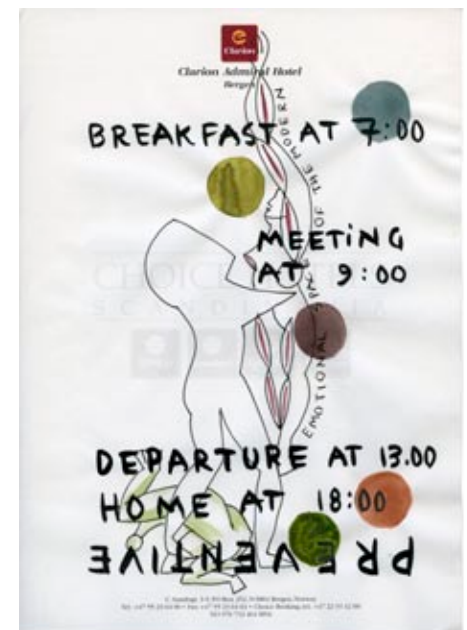
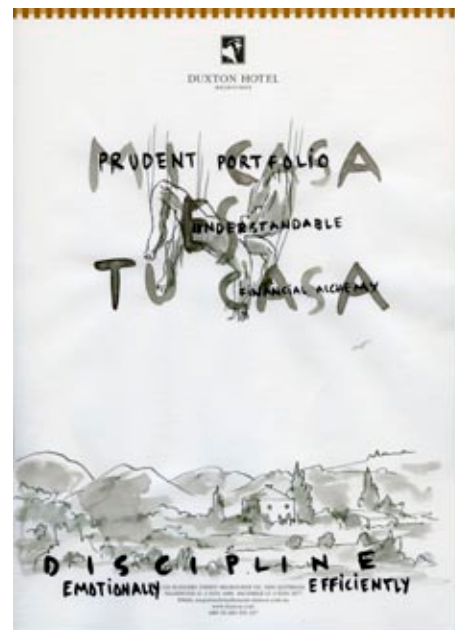
Repeating these figures added other levels of information to the work, like that of memory, place, time and will - there was clearly an act of will behind this proposed obsession. It also helped me to develop a sense of discipline and to expand the realm of my work by limiting the use of some tools. In other words, it gave me the chance to focus on the linguistic operation as a whole instead of trying to be "personal" and "creative".

A: Ten years is a lot of time in a person's life; less in a more historical perception of time. What is time in contemporary dynamics, you think?

C: I'm not sure that the contemporary necessarily has to have an expiry date.

A: Ok. That is one answer to a question about differences in the perception of time...! That is showing that there is a difference.





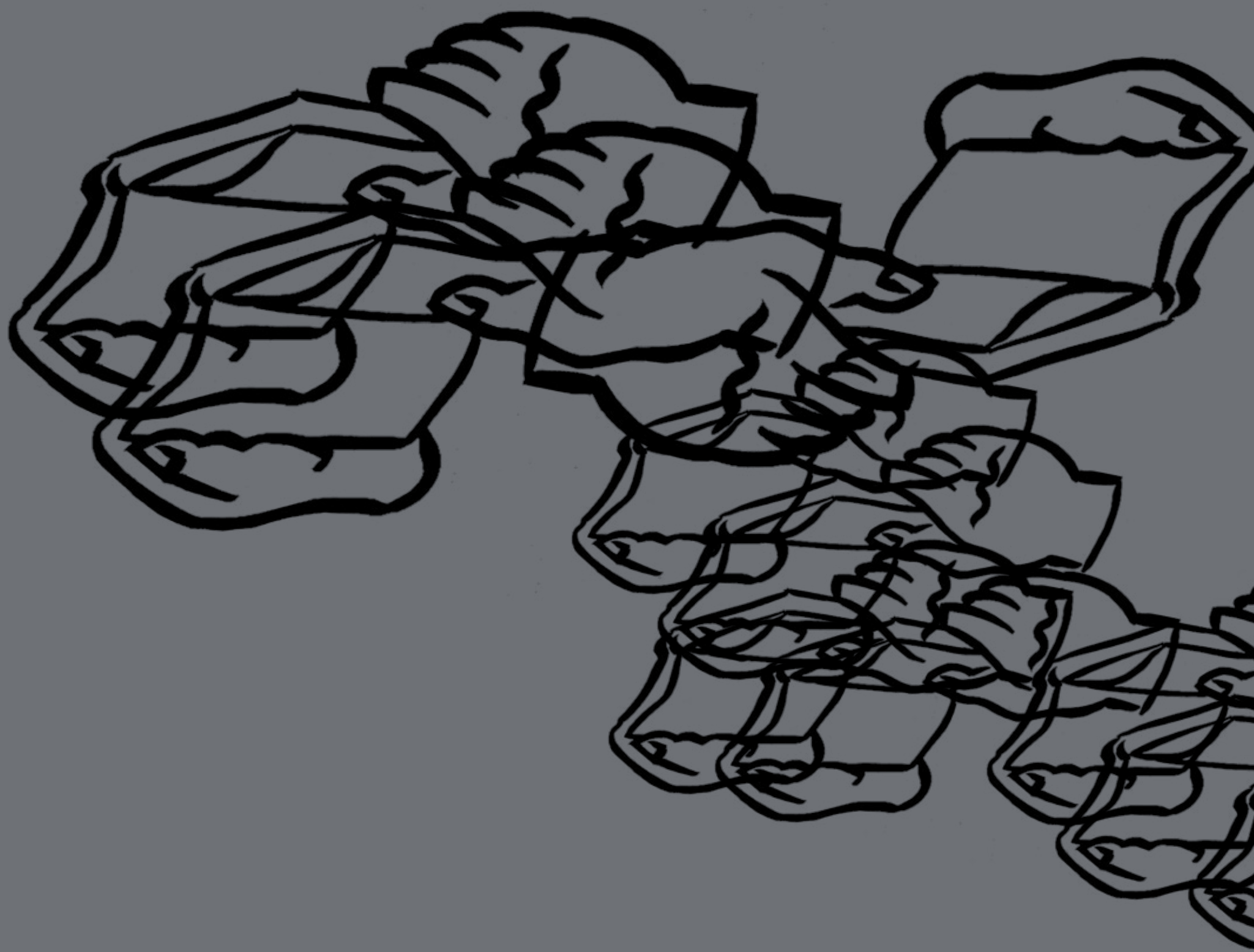
C: There certainly is. There's a difference between being here and now and escaping into the present. Remember the research you did in which you sent letters to different museums around the world devoted to contemporary art? Amongst other questions you smuggled the issue of the definition of the contemporary. Remember?

A: I do remember, although rather than smuggled in between the lines, it was quite straightforwardly put about the contemporary, I have to say... It was a qualitative questionnaire that I sent out to a number of art institutions around the world. I wanted to build up an understanding of the activities that are going on in these places that define themselves as contemporary art spaces... I got a lot of answers, and both informative and analytical feed back. When it came to the perception of what the contemporary is, there were small attempts at discussion, however. One director of a museum got himself involved in a deeper intention to untangle the complexities of the issue. I don't know if it is significant, but he actually left his post in that institution, some months later.

C: I remember that most of the institutions answered your more formal questions – about how many objects they had, how many visitors they received, how many square metres they could dispose of, etc – but they just left the question of what they considered to be the contemporary unanswered. It's like the contemporary is more a brand than an historical notion nowadays, isn't it?

July, 2008, Lund, Sweden

Room Service (The Rape of the Sabines), 2007
63 sketches on hotel paper







Painting, 1998
 Soil, red ocher and Indian ink
 on paper, 150 x 128 cm
 Ulla and Greger Olsson Art
 Collection, Sweden



Drawing, 1998
 Earth pigments and Indian ink
 on amate paper, 148 x 118 cm
 Ulla and Greger Olsson Art
 Collection, Sweden

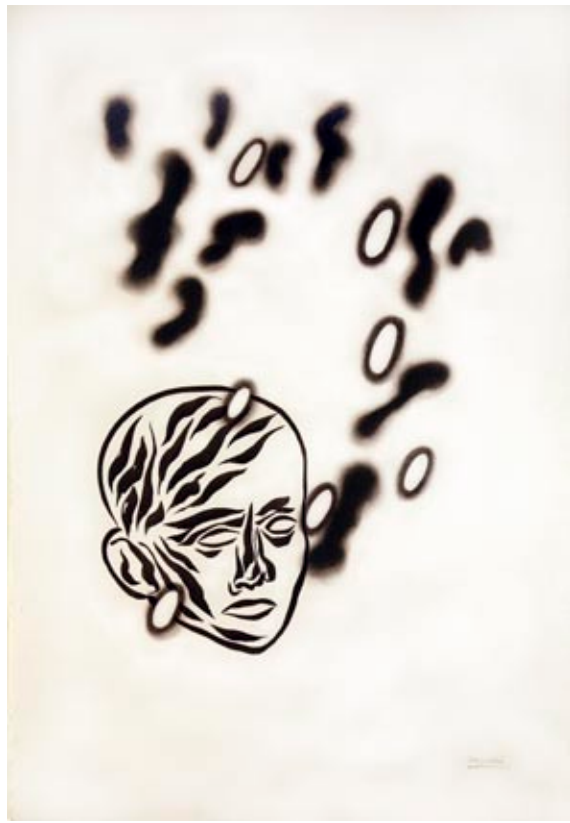
Figure, 1999
 Bronze sculpture, 80 x 36 x 27 cm
 Tony Fage Foundry, Alajuela, Costa Rica
 Daniel Yankelwitz Collection, San José,
 Costa Rica

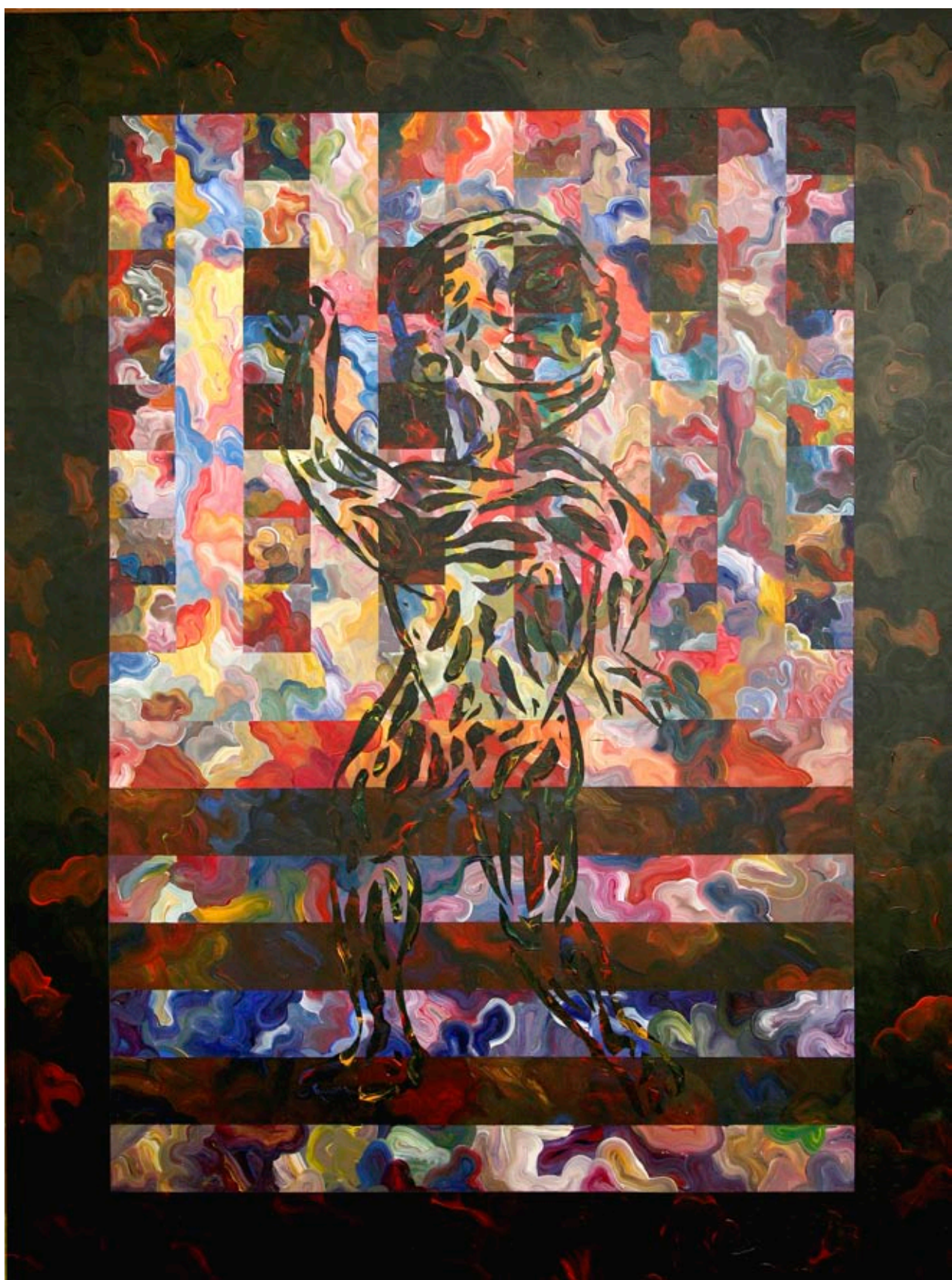




Drawings, 1998

Indian ink and pigments on
paper, 100 x 70 cm
Ulla and Greger Olsson Art
Collection, Sweden







Painting, 1999

Acrylic on canvas, 195 x 145 cm
Ulla and Greger Olsson Art Col-
lection, Sweden



San Lázaro, 1999

Bronze sculpture and objects, 58 x 27 x 27 cm
Tony Fage Foundry, Alajuela, Costa Rica
Collection of the artist



Capriola



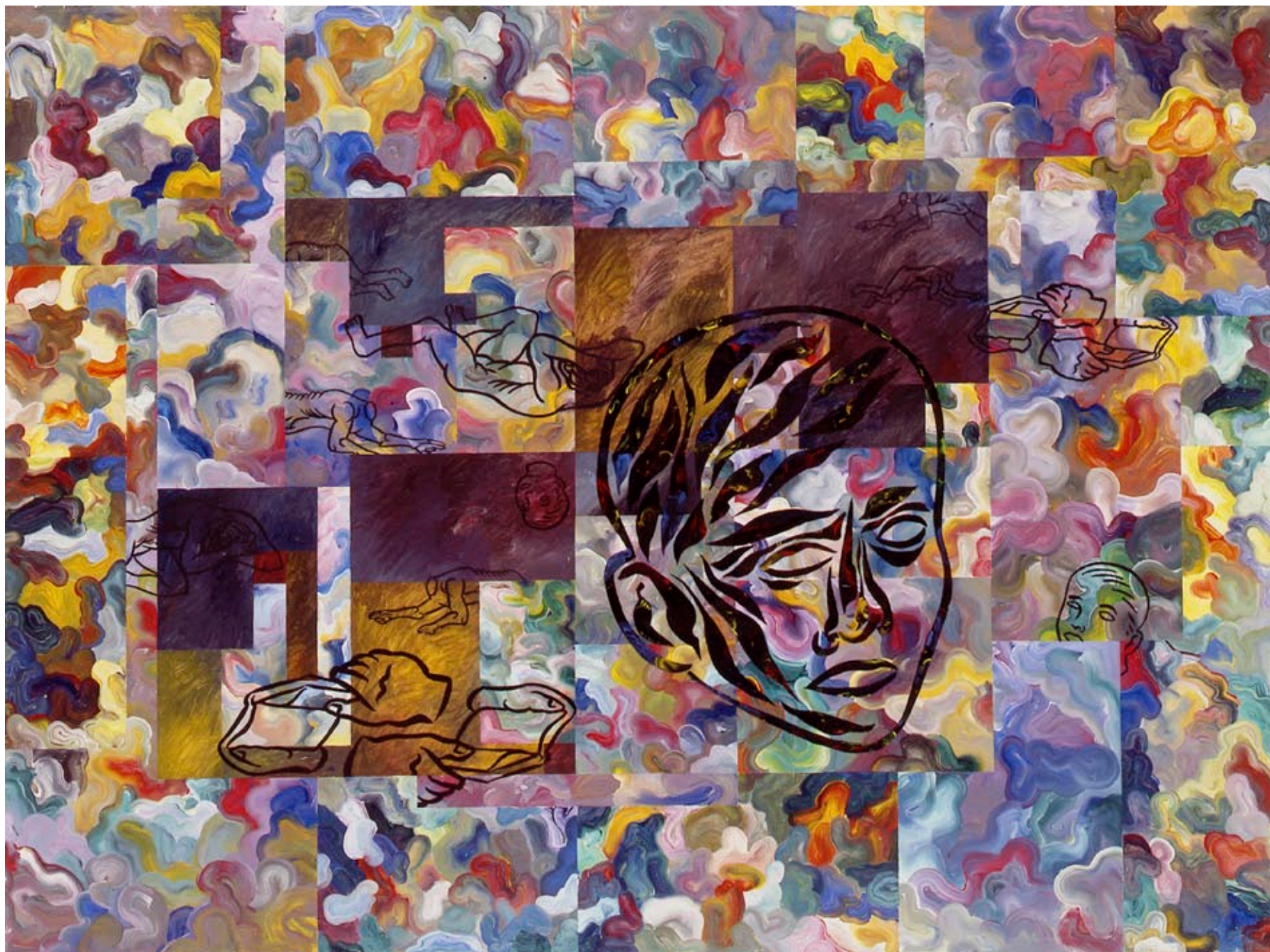
Painting, 1999

Encaustic and pencil on canvas, 135 x 100 cm.
Ulla and Greger Olsson Art Collection, Sweden



Jet-lag Mambo, 2000

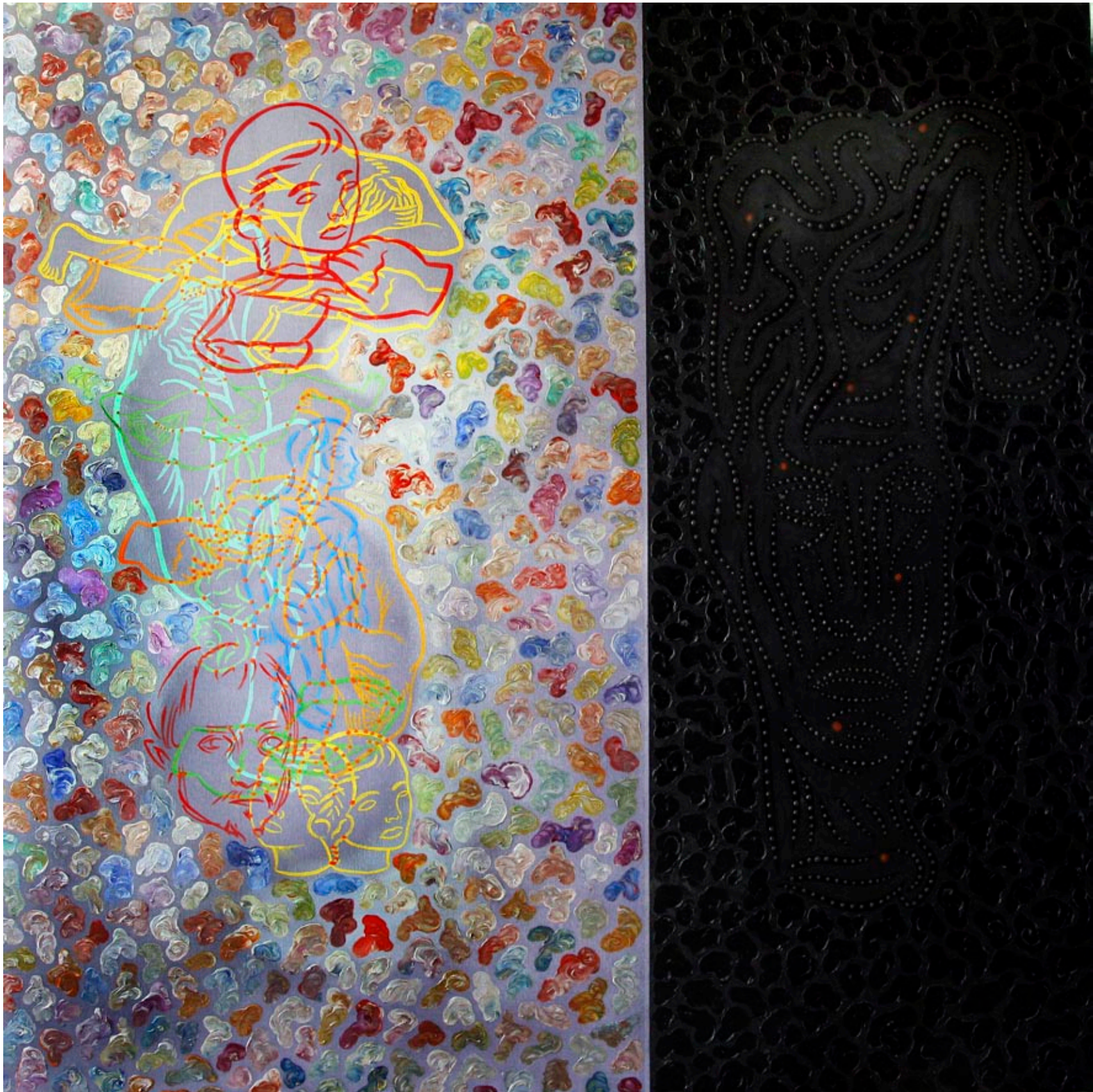
Installation, anamorphic figure and wrapped bottles
Henie Onstad Museum, Oslo, Norway



Painting, 1999
Acrylic on canvas, 149 x 200 cm.
Private collection, Italy

Painting, 1999
Acrylic on canvas, 149 x 200 cm.
Private collection, Italy







Painting, 2001

Acrylic, charcoal and encaustic
on canvas, 200 x 200 cm.
Ulla & Greger Olsson
Art Collection, Sweden

Painting, 2001

Acrylic and encaustic on
canvas, 200 x 200 cm.
Ulla & Greger Olsson
Art Collection, Sweden



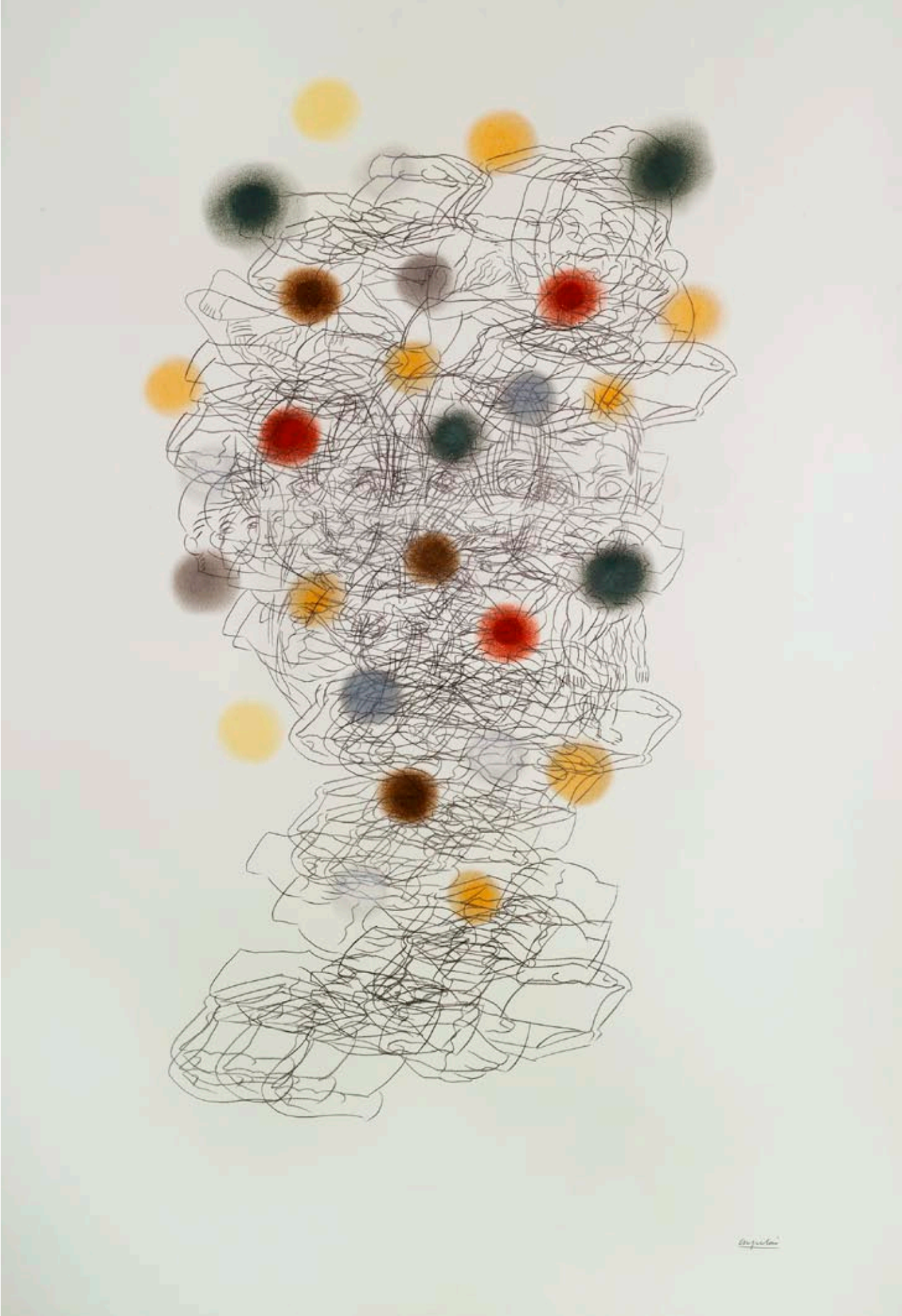


**Dematerialization/Rematerialization,
onlyyou, 2002**

Anamorphic figure painted on wall,
engraved stones, books and dishes
Bildmuséet, Umeaa, Sweden

The living room, 2002

Installation
Refuge, Henie Onstad
Museum, Oslo, Norway



Signature



Drawings, 2003-2005

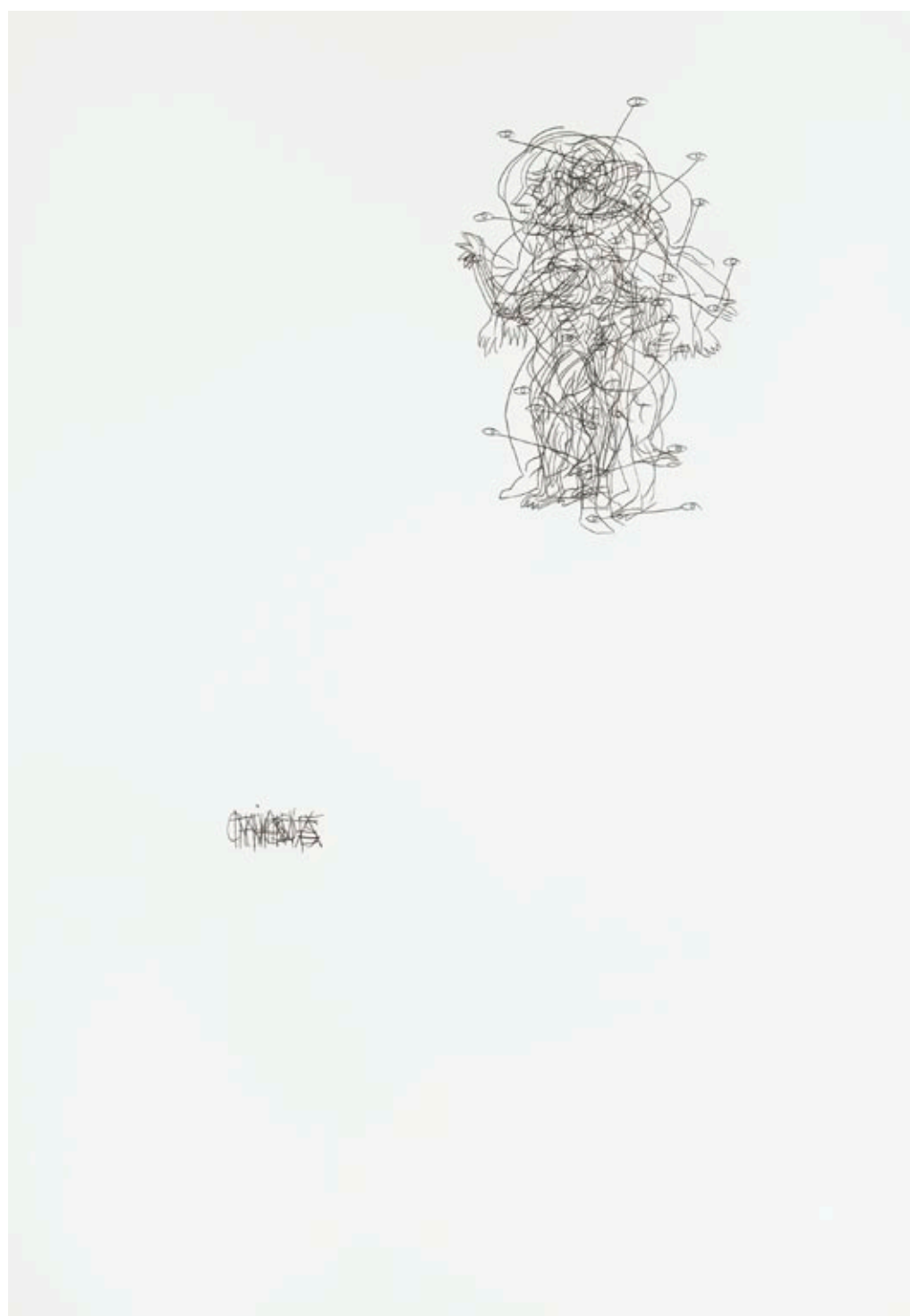
Pencil and pastel on paper, 120 x 70 cm
Private collections, Sweden

Painting, from the Monochrom Series, 2002
Paint, soil and indian ink on canvas, 200 x 240 cm,
Collection of the artist







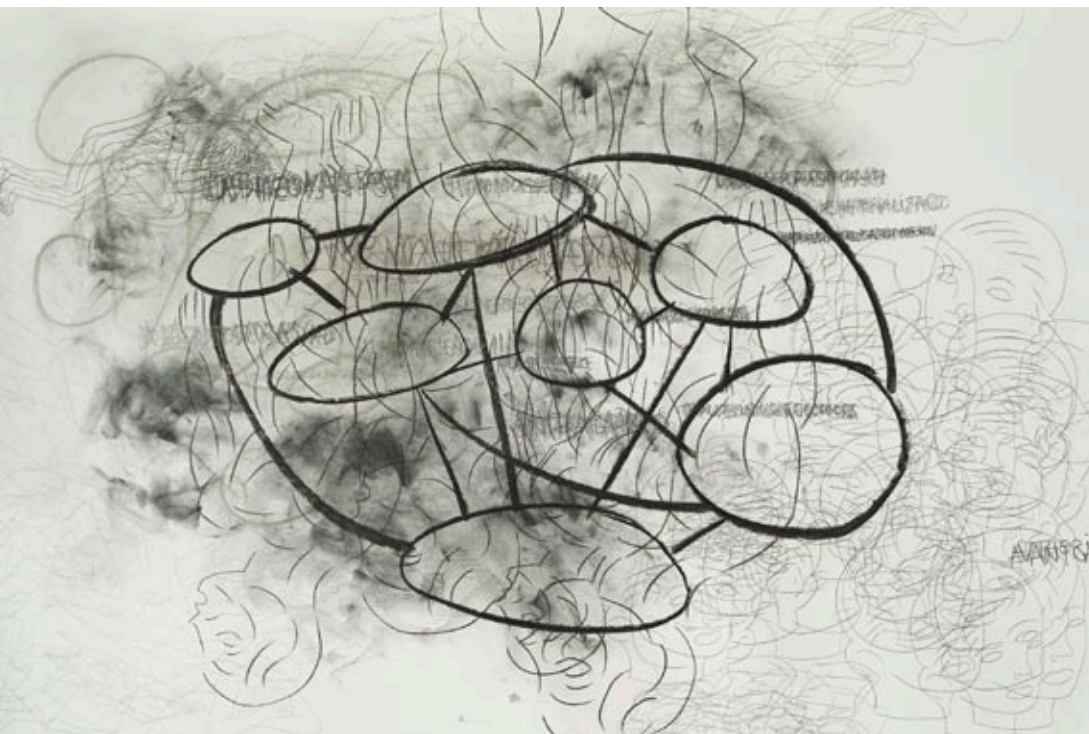


Painting, from the Monochrome Series, 2002
paint, soil and ink on canvas, 200 x 210 cm

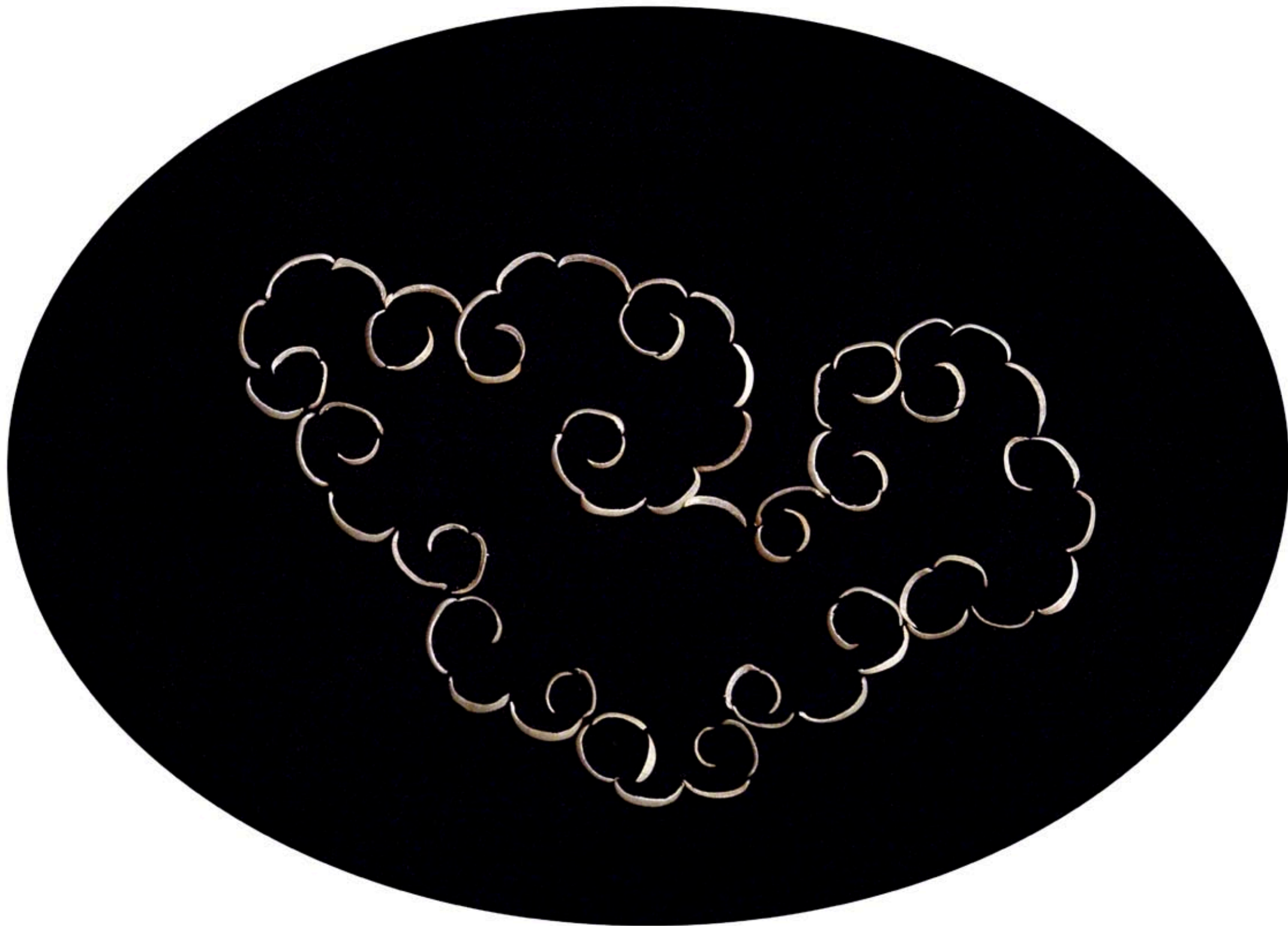
This is not made in China, 2003
Pencil on paper

Eisoptrophobia, (The Fear of Mirrors), 2002
Miniature on paper, 120 x 300 cm.

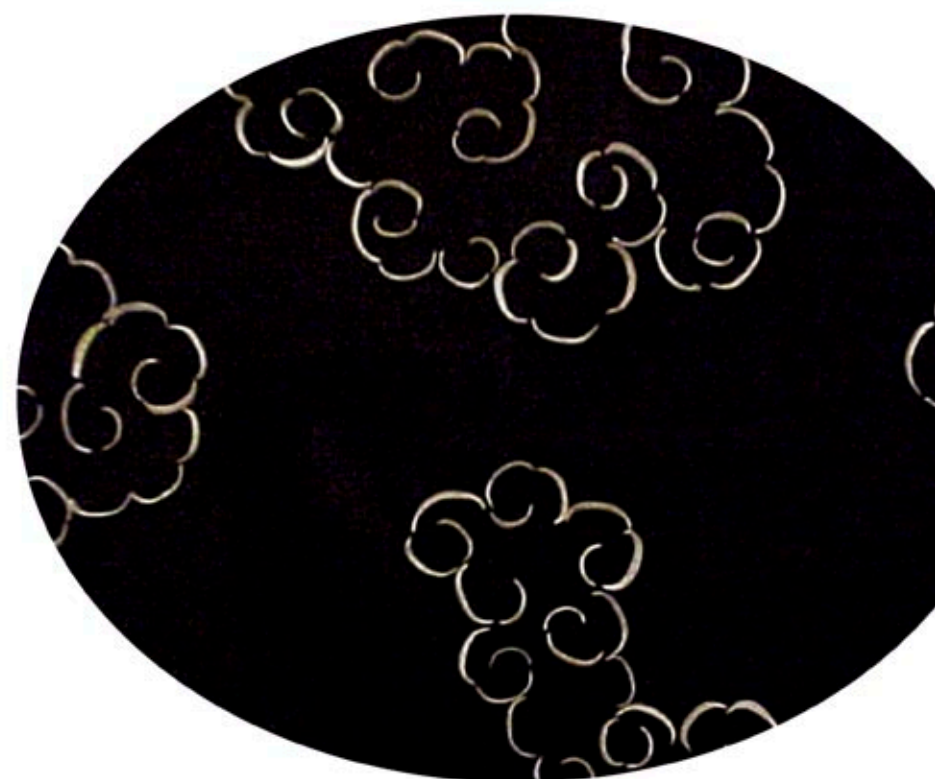
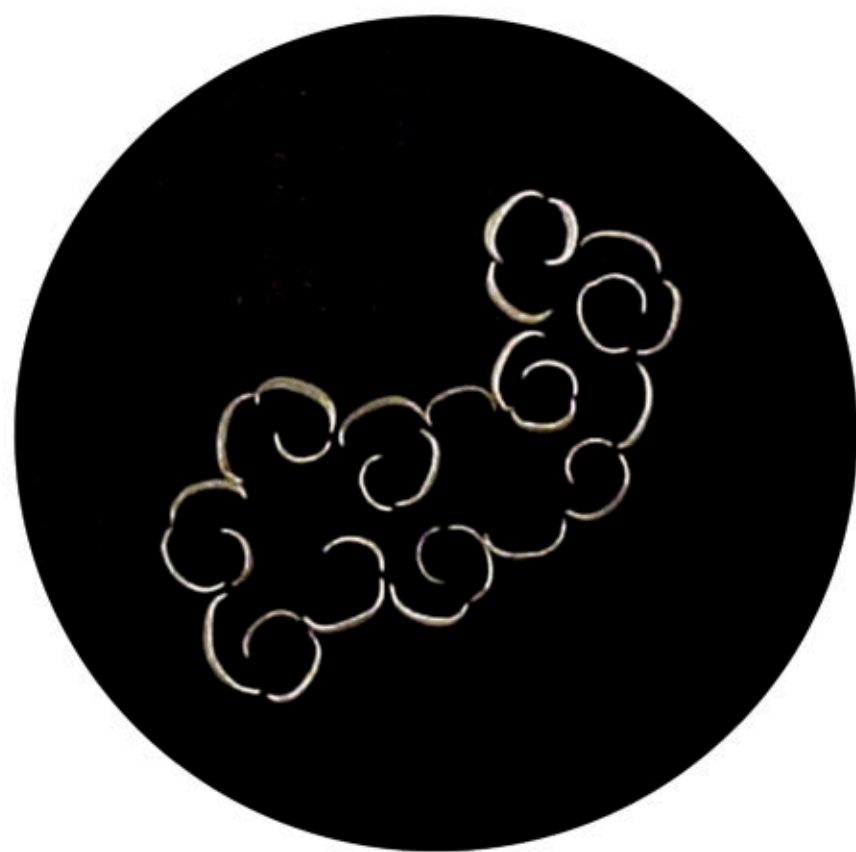
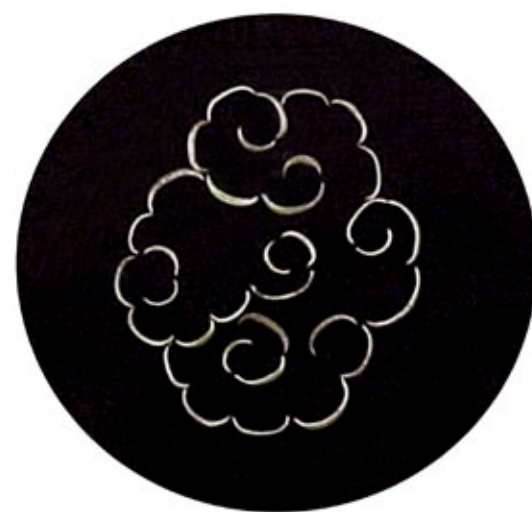
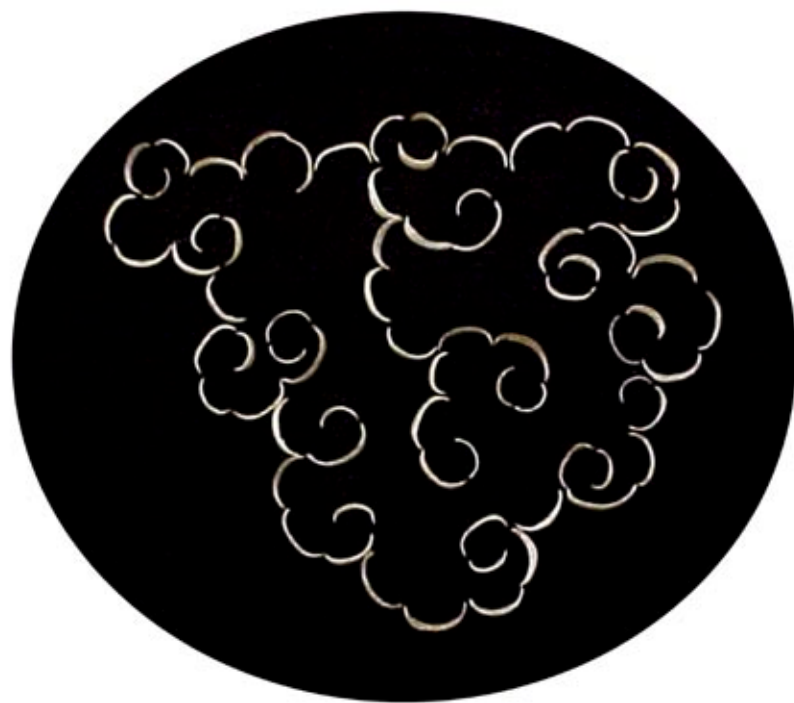








Finger nail cuttings, 2000...2008

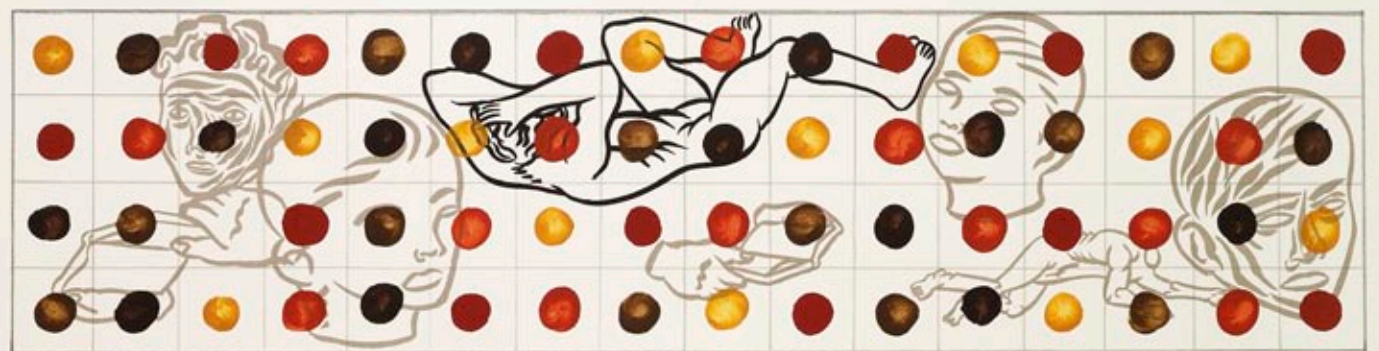


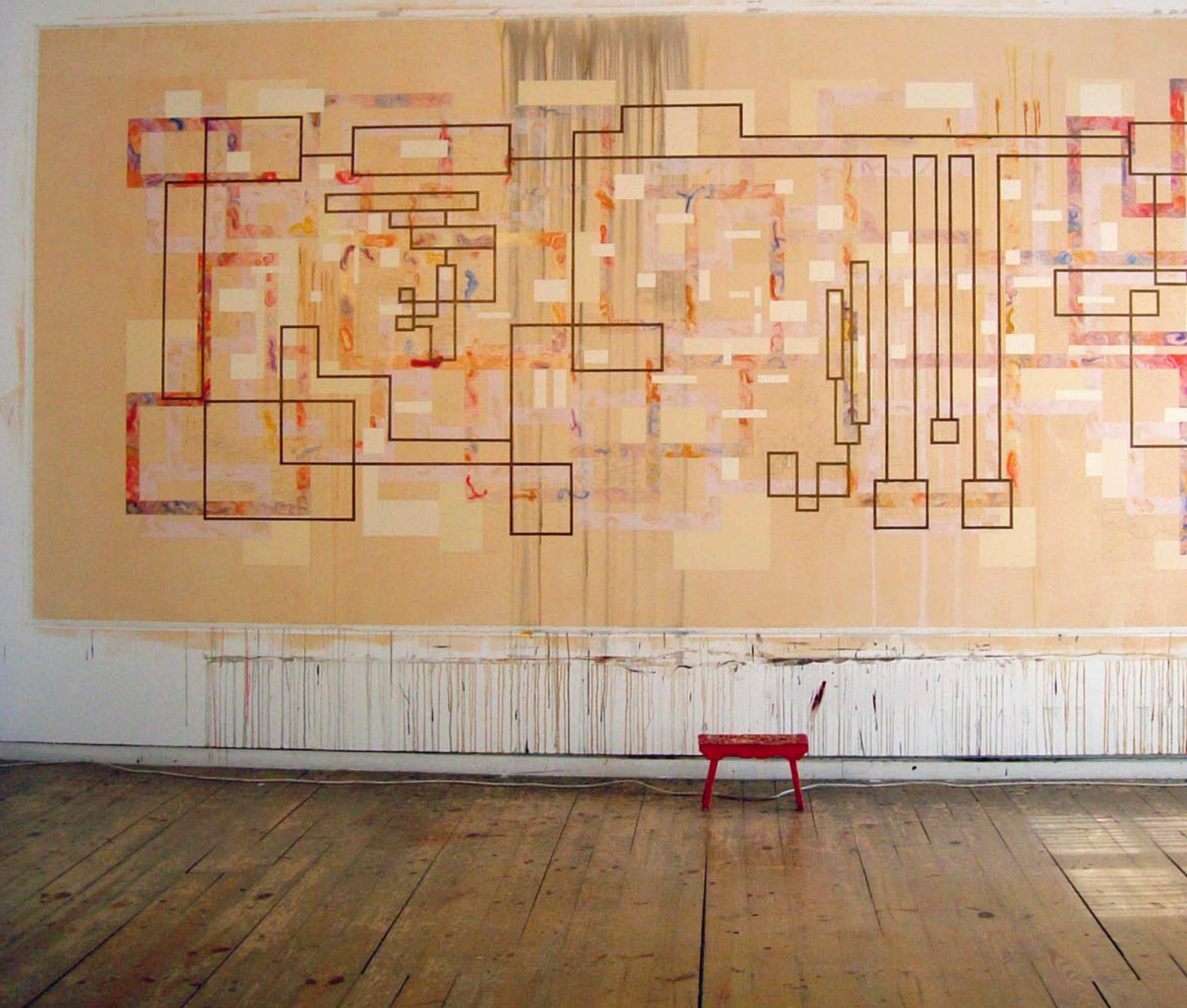


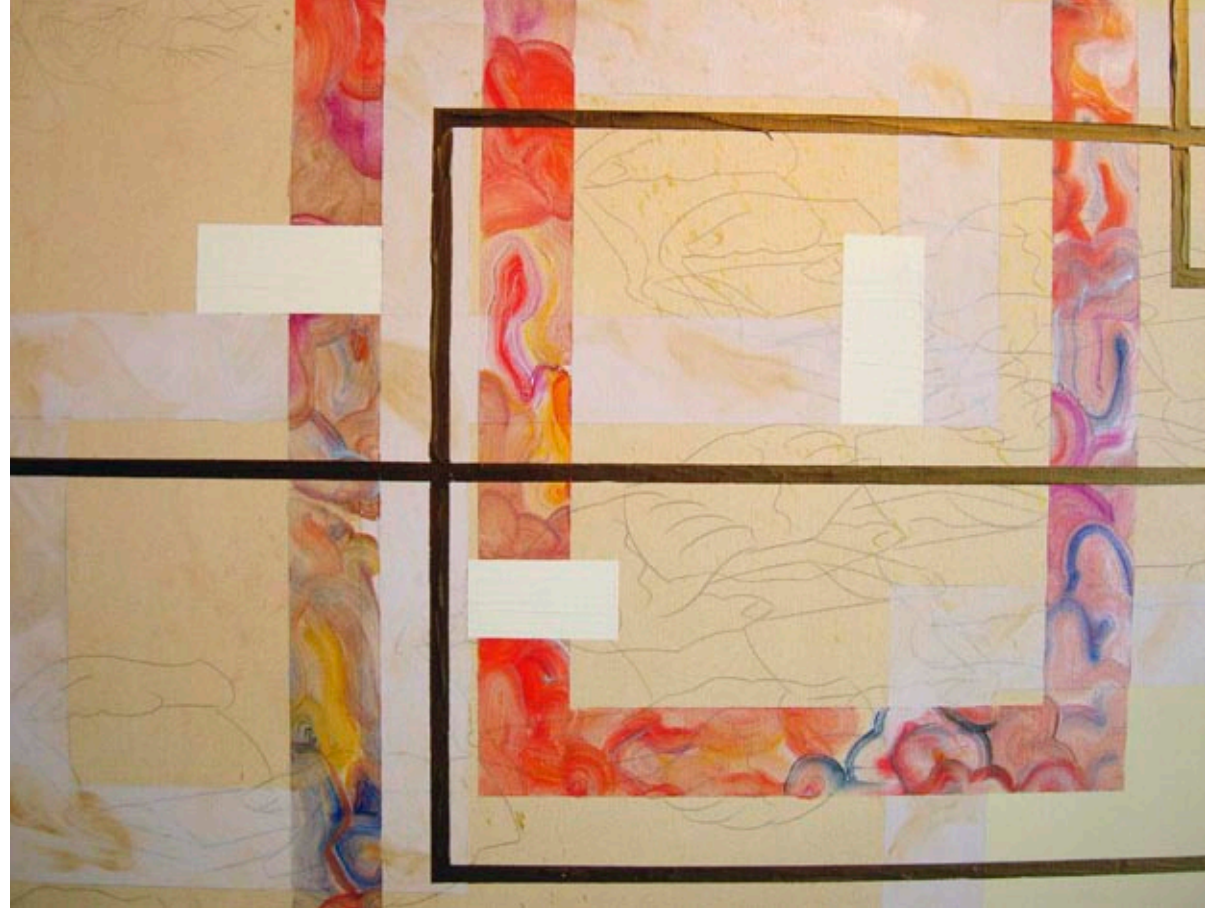
onlyyou, 2002
 Installation
 Bildmuséet, Umeaa, Sweden

Handcoloured lithography, 2000
 Edition of 100, 100 x 70 cm
 Edited by Poligrafa, Barcelona, Spain

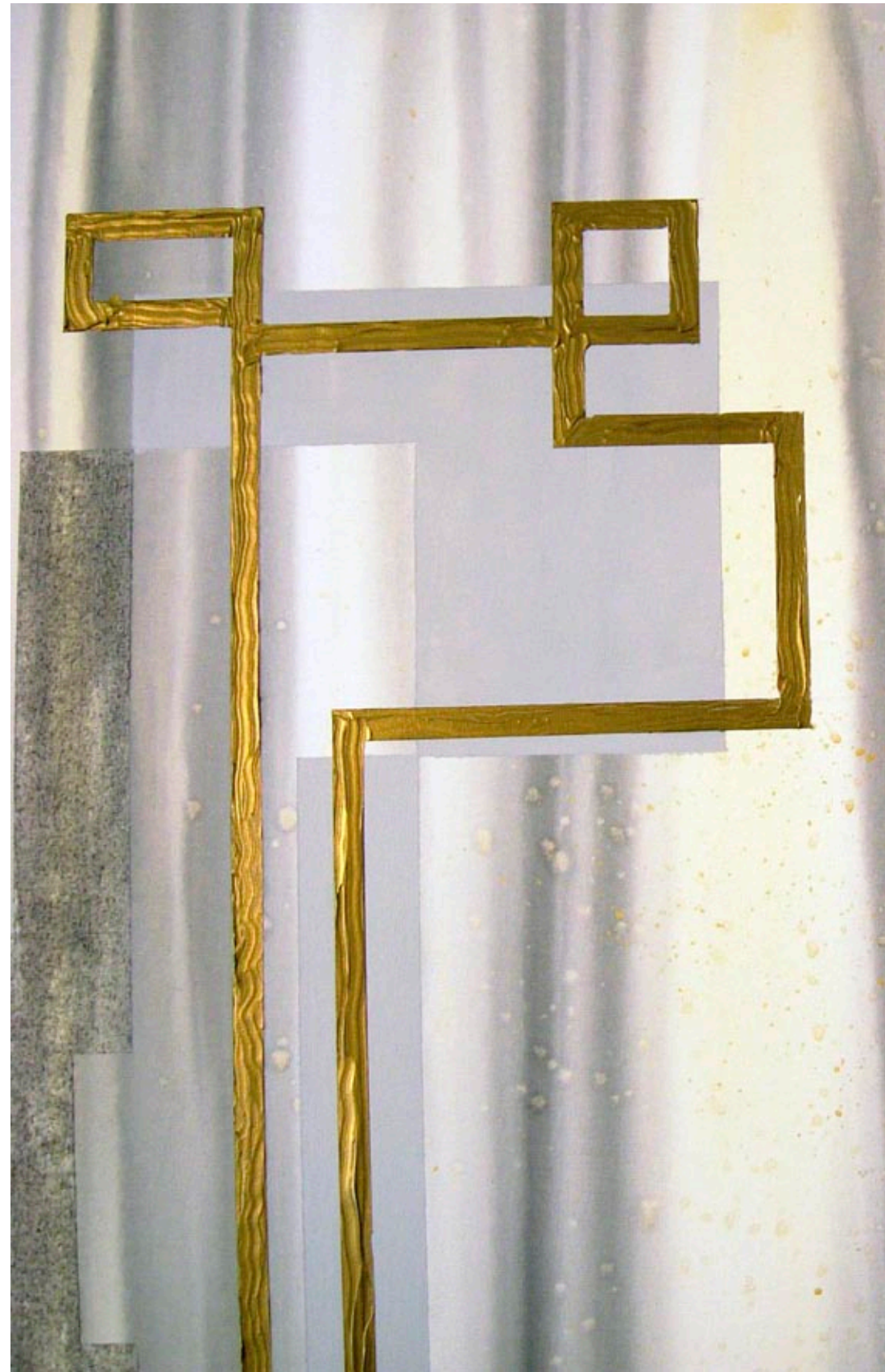
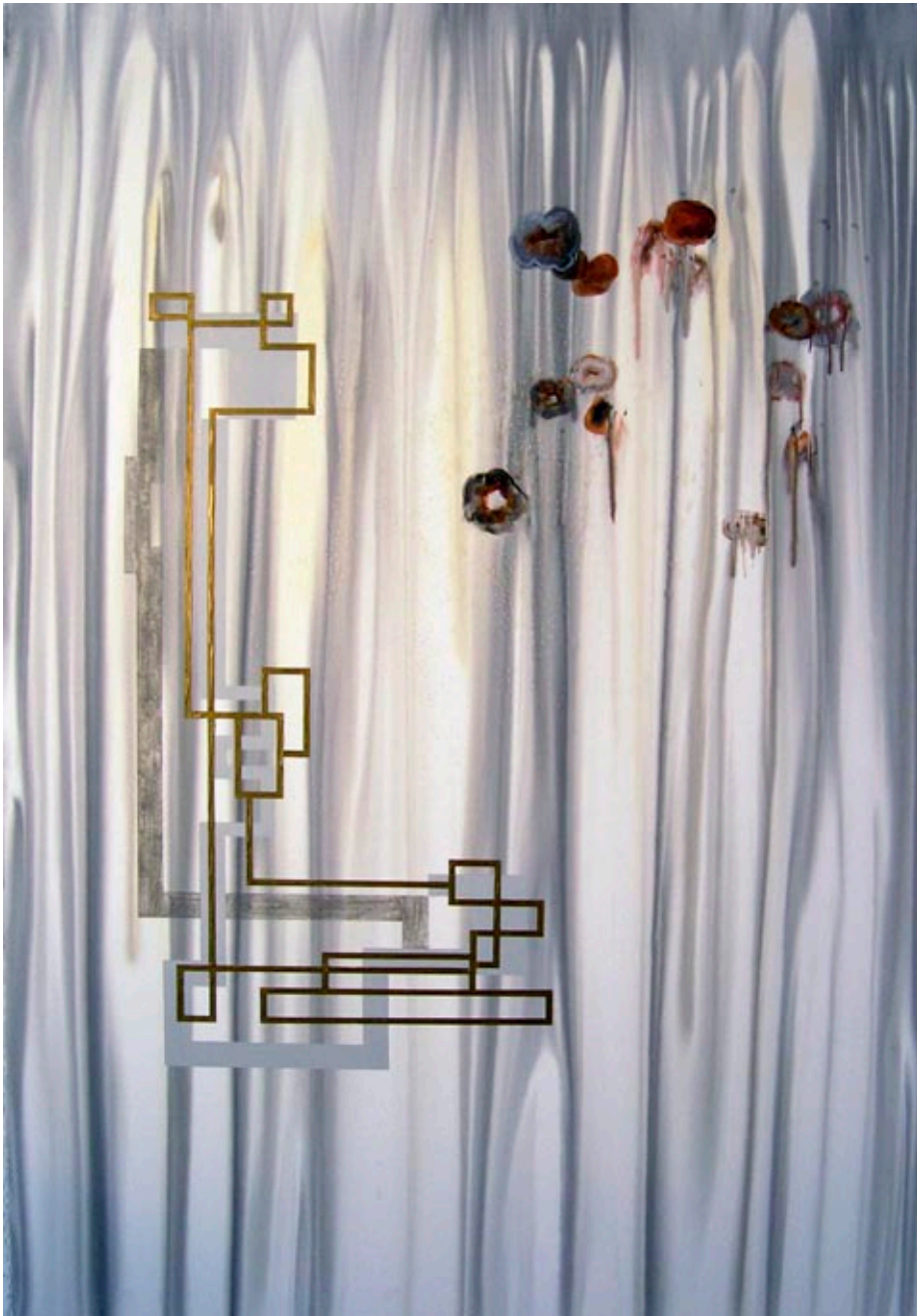
Handcoloured lithography, 2000
 Edition of 100, 700 x 100 cm
 Edited by Poligrafa, Barcelona, Spain







Painting, 2003
 Acrylic on canvas, 210 x 500 cm
 Private collection, Escazú, Costa Rica

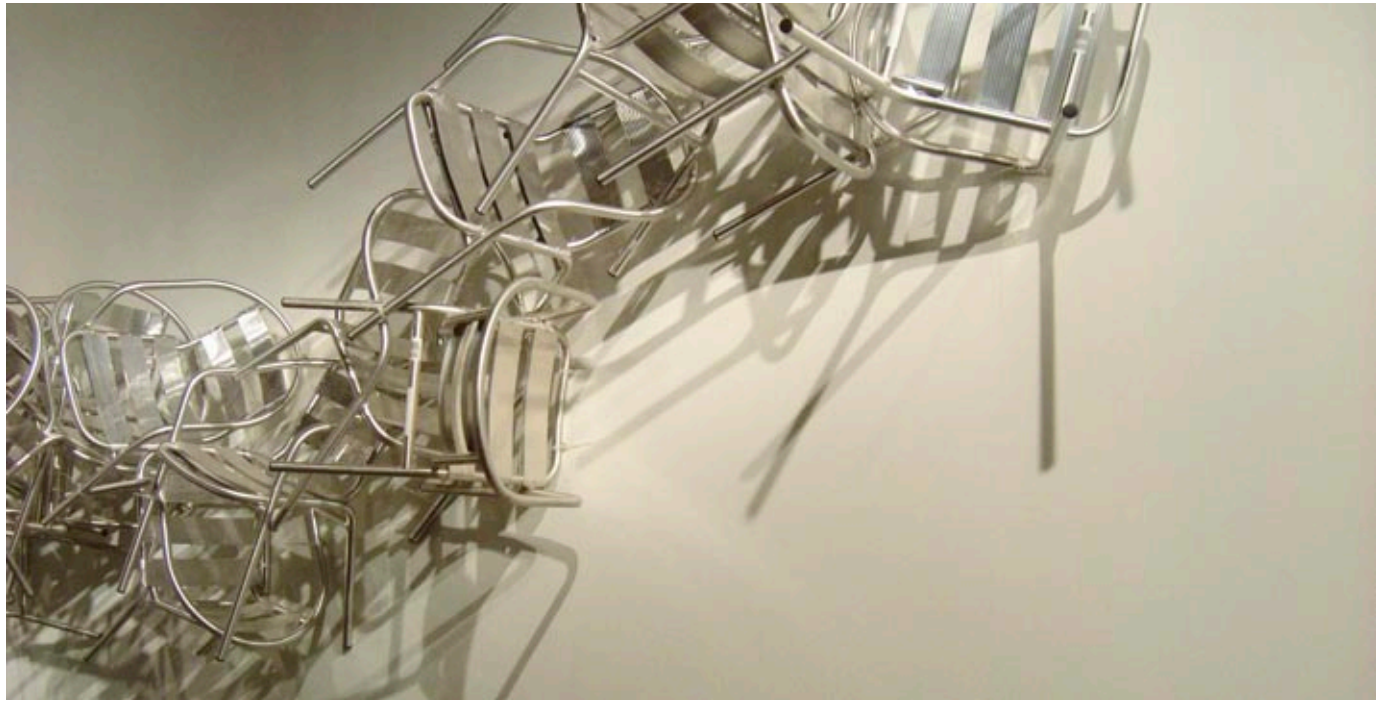


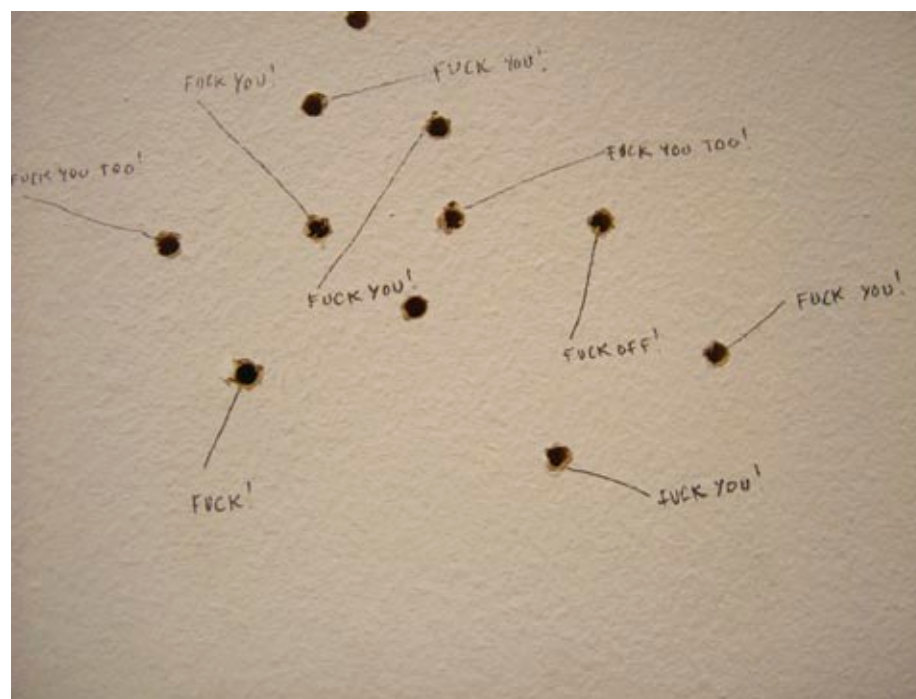
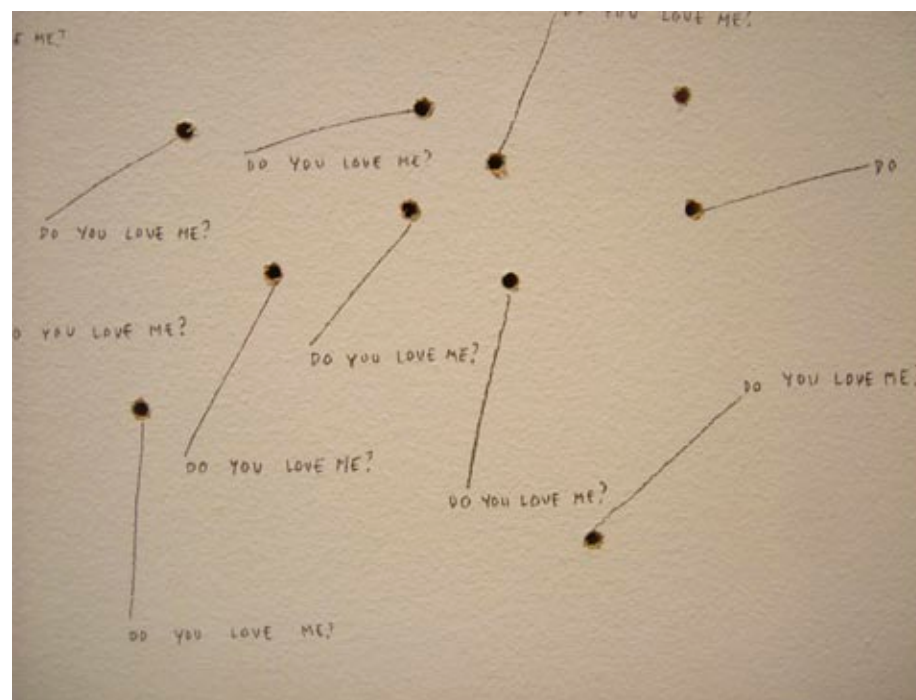
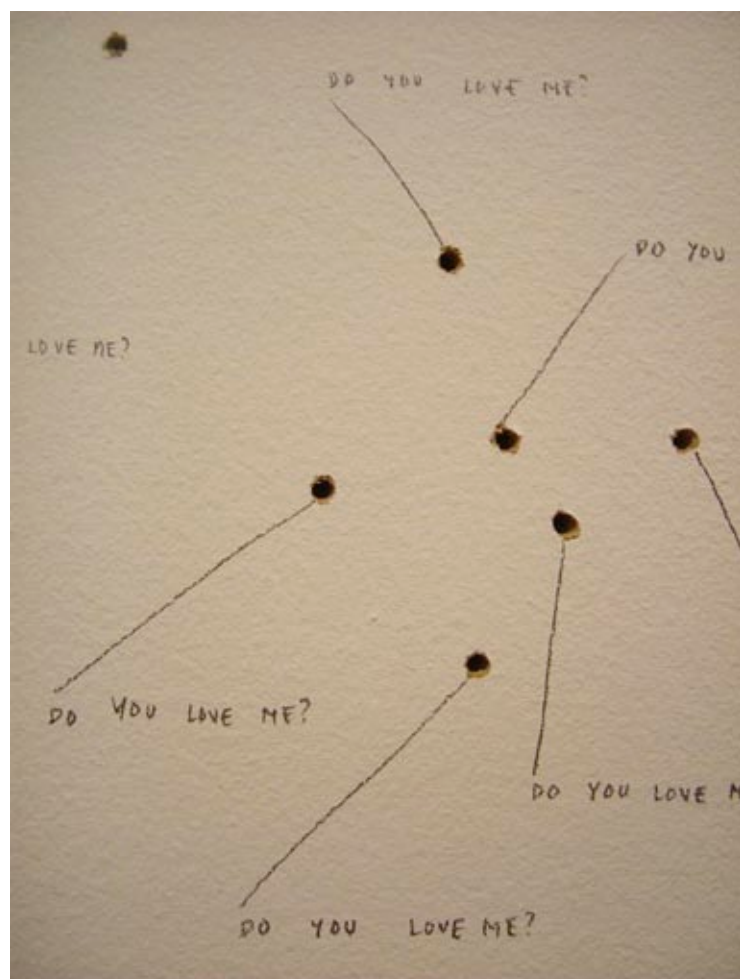


Golem, 2003
Acrylic on canvas, 180 x 120 cm
Private collection, USA



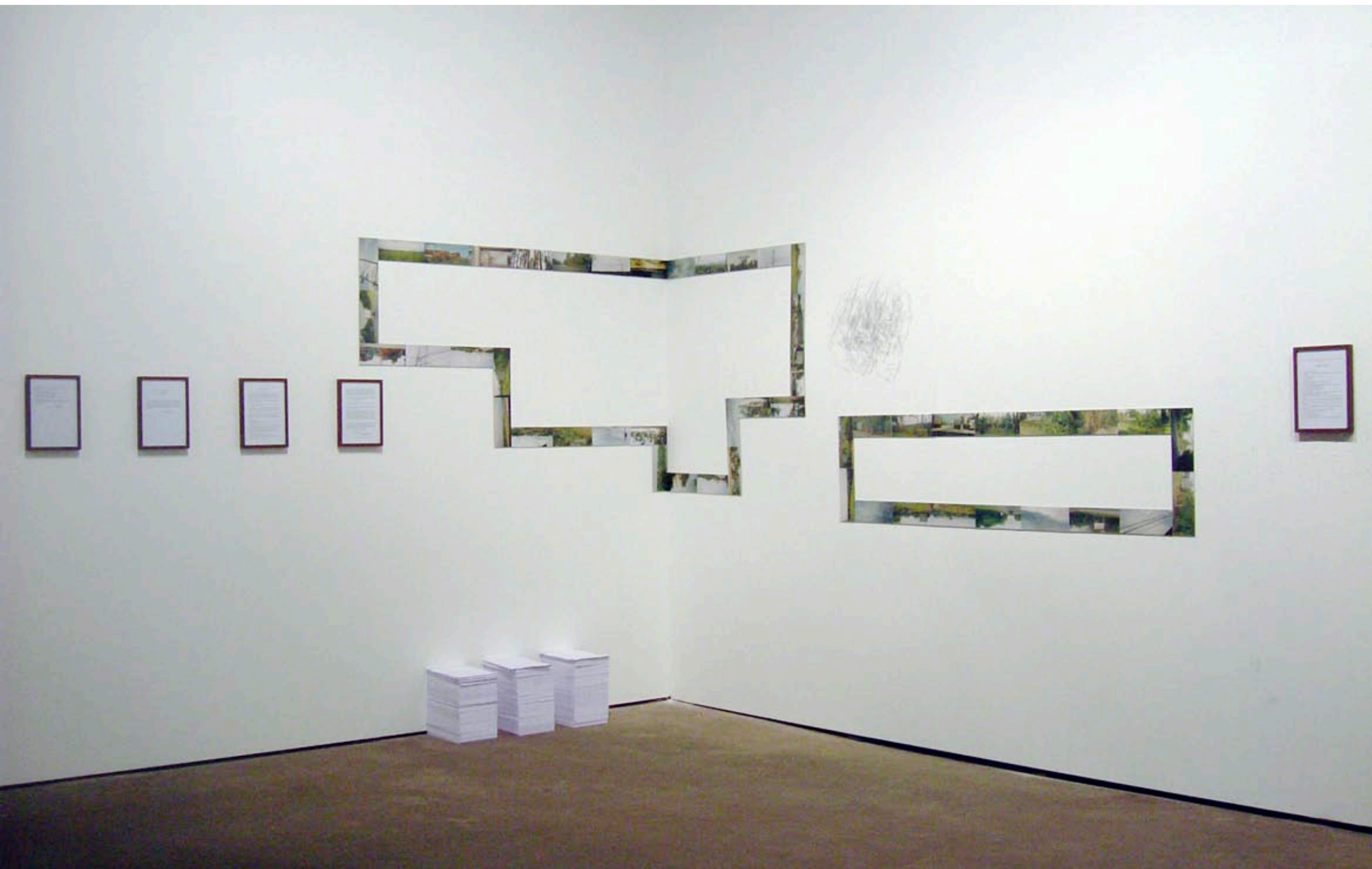
Selfportrait, 2003
Installation
in IV Bienal do MERCOSUR,
Porto Alegre, Brazil



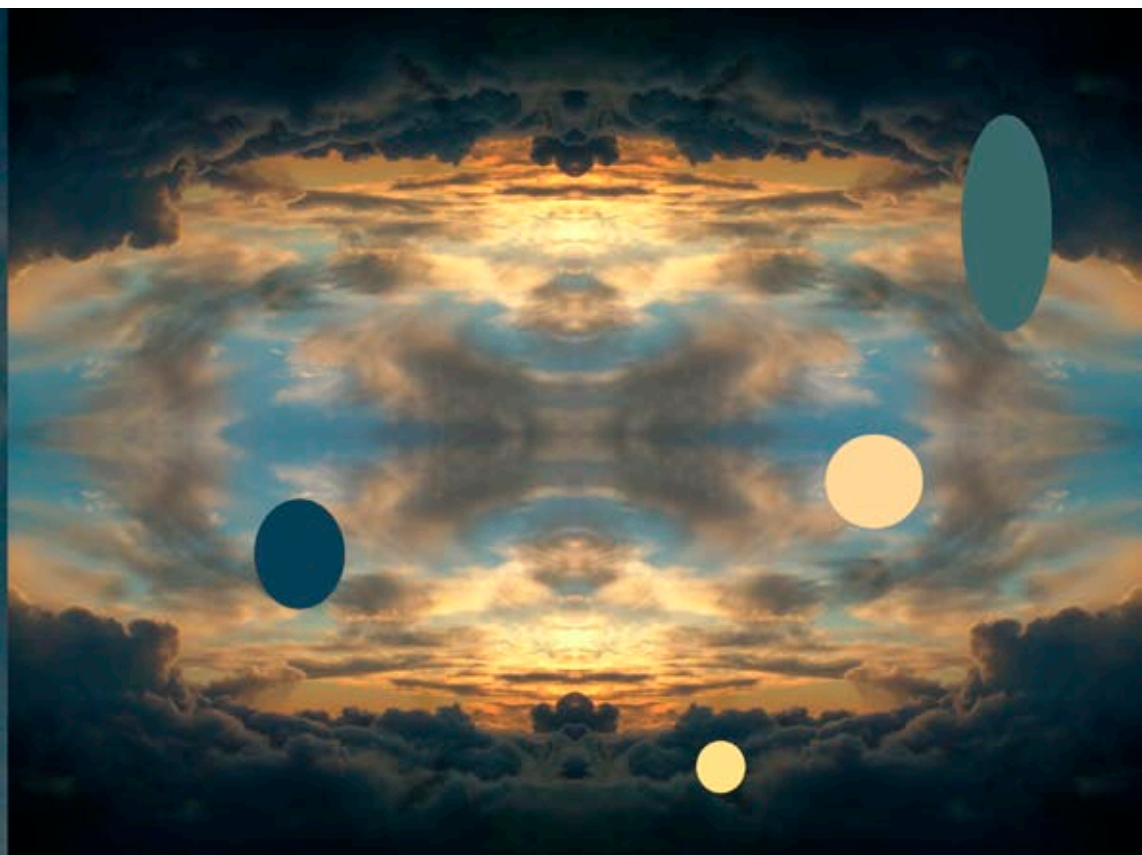
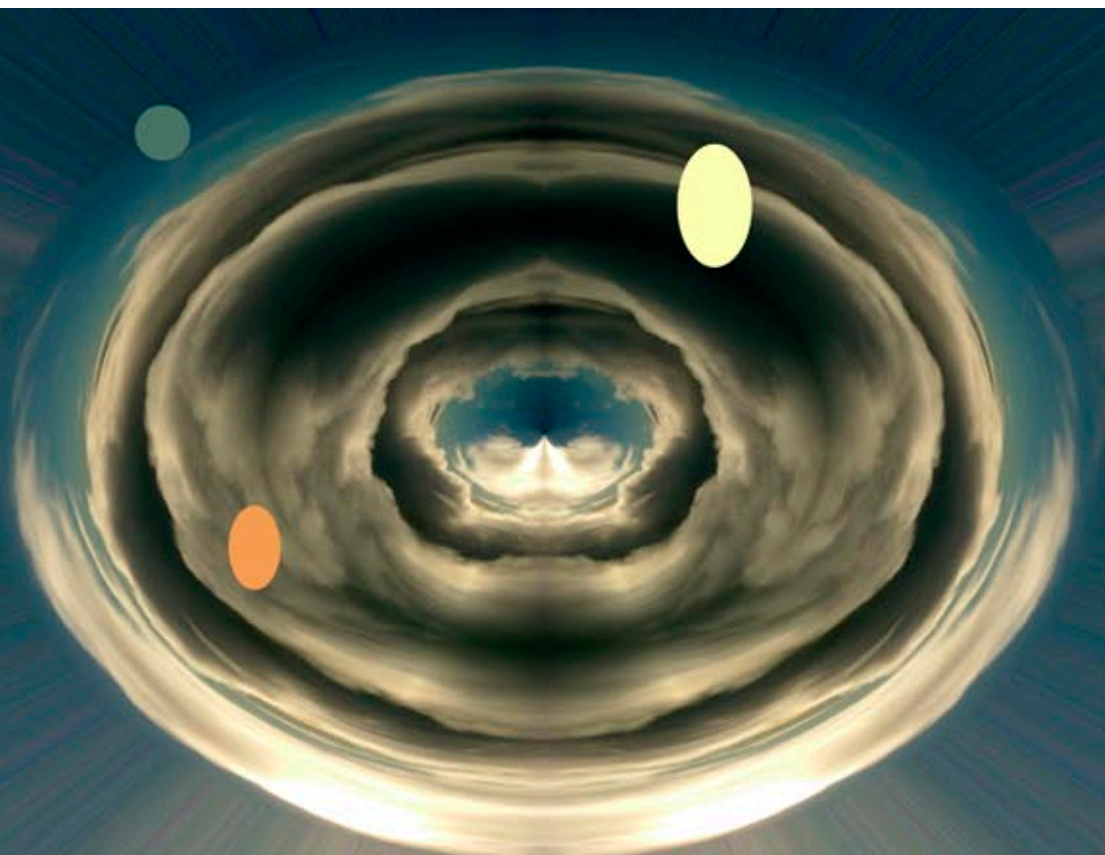
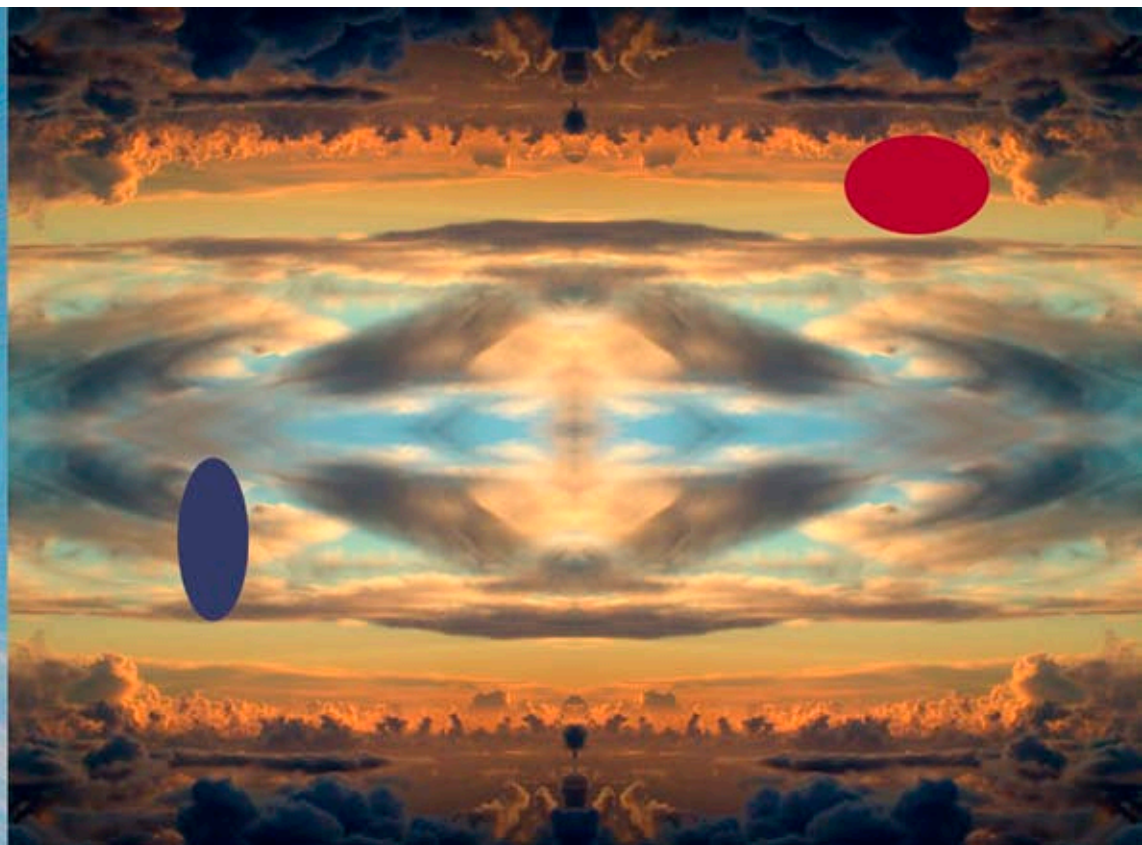


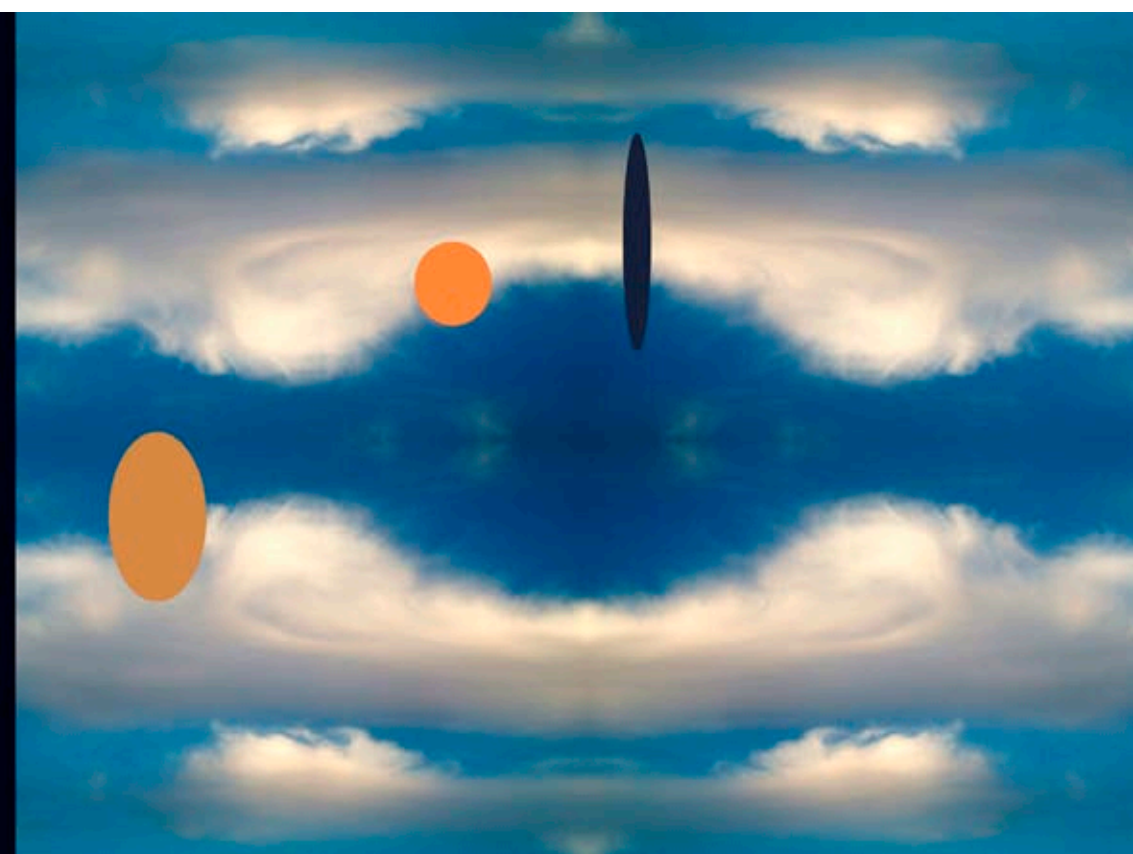
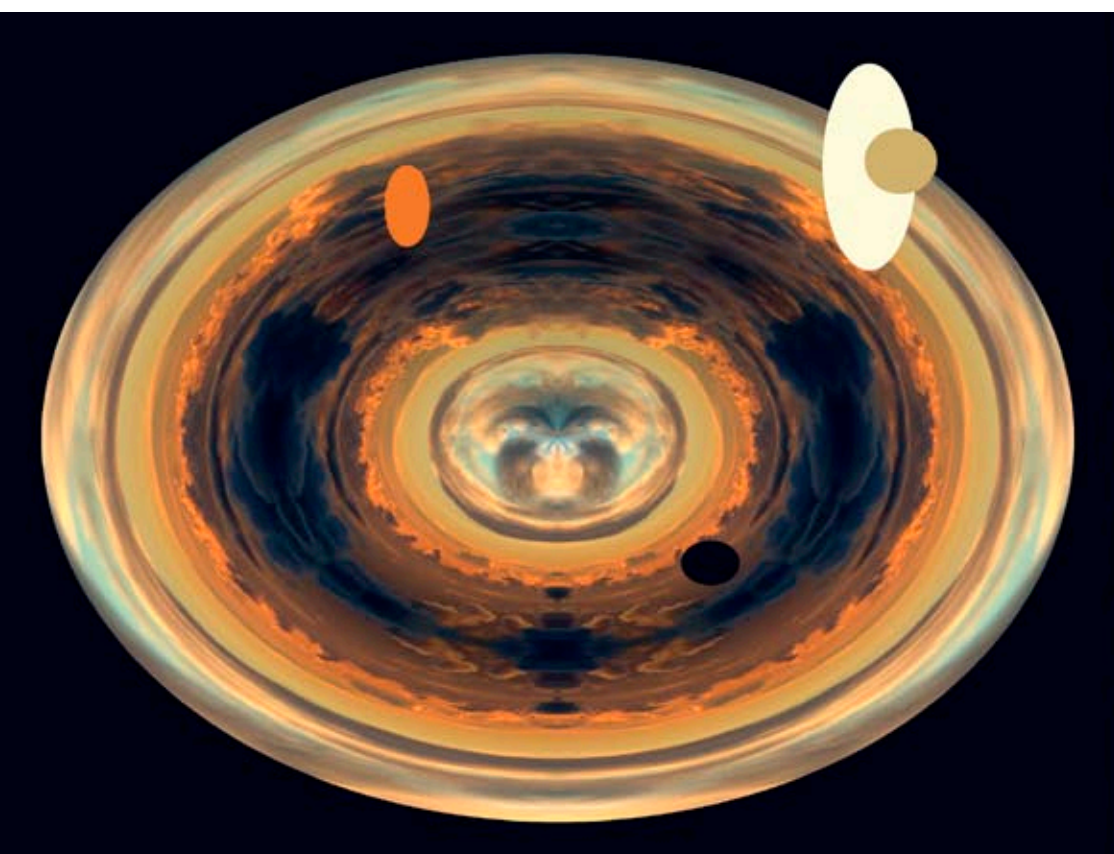
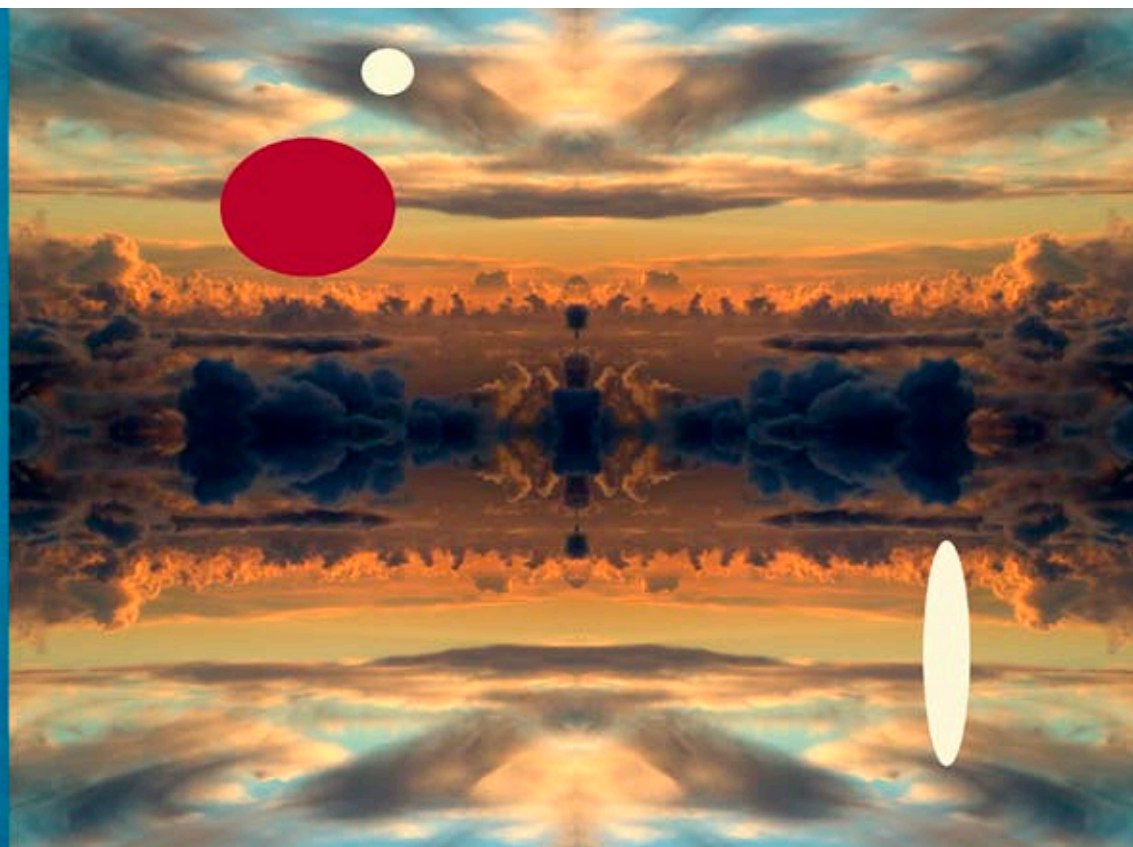
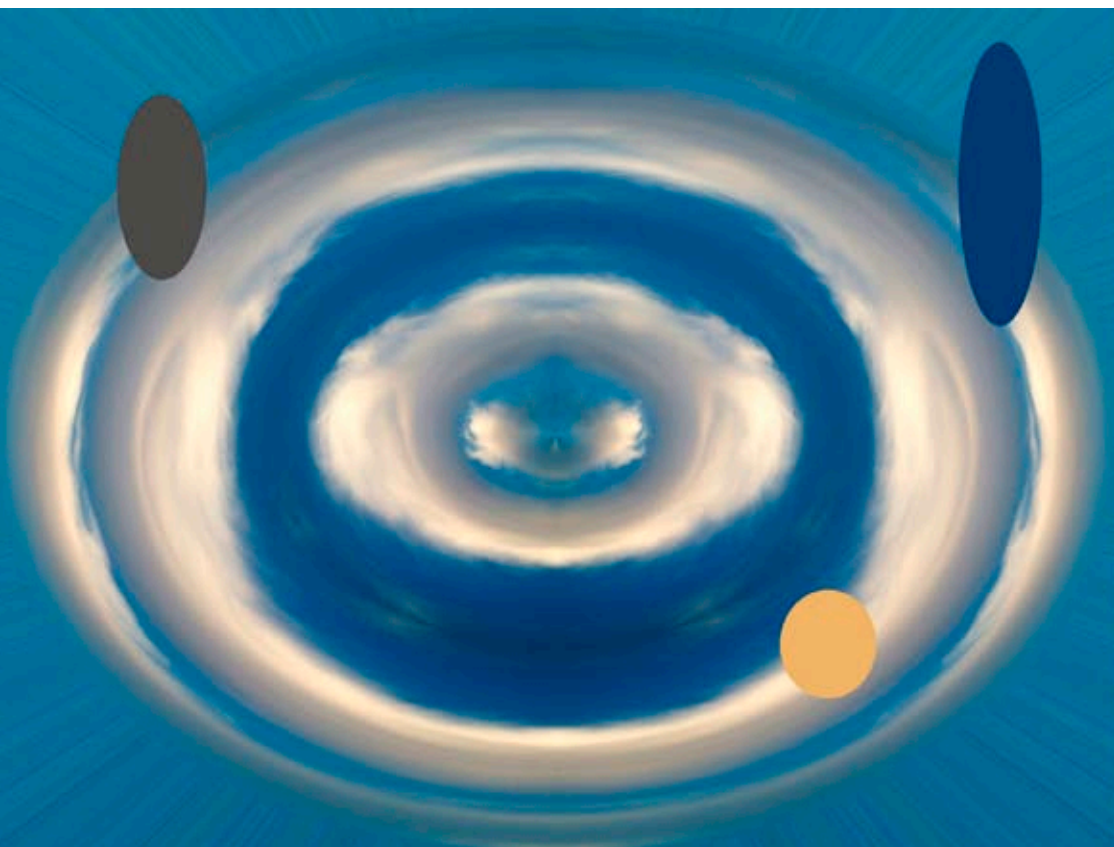
Selfportrait (detail), 2003
 Installation
 in IV Bienal do MERCOSUR, Porto
 Alegre, Brazil



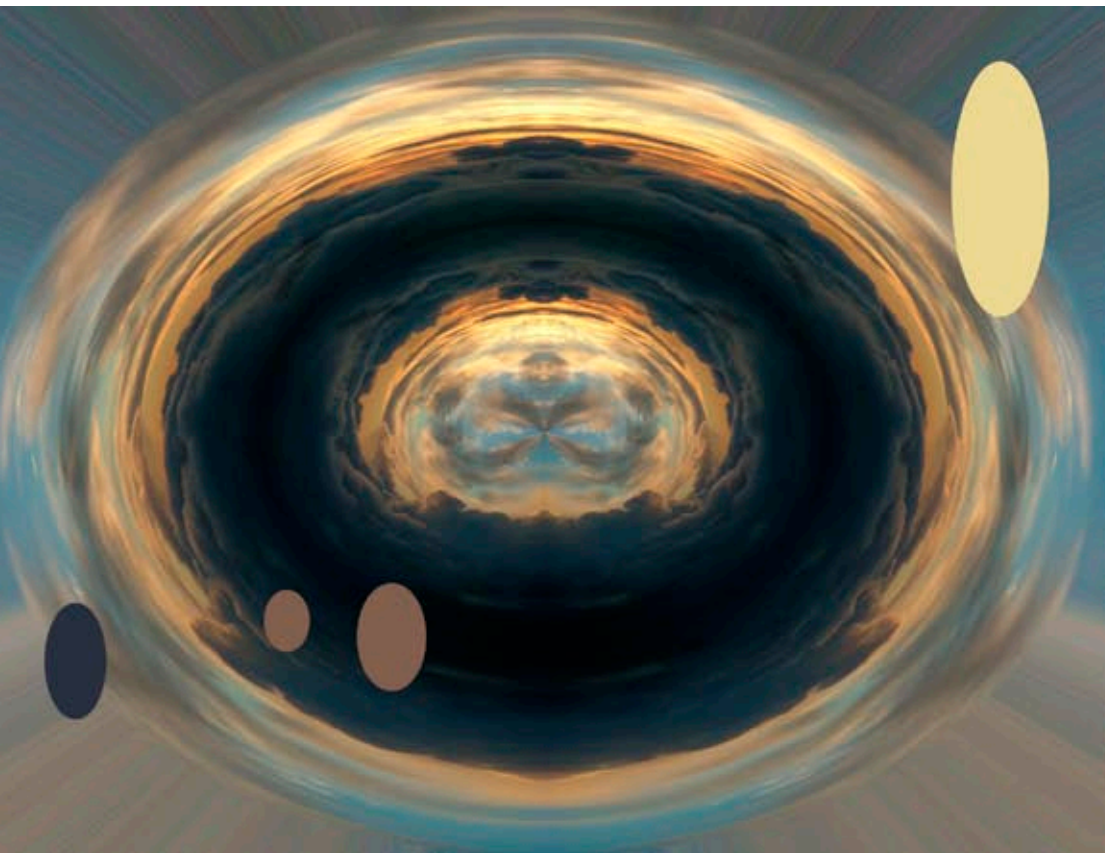


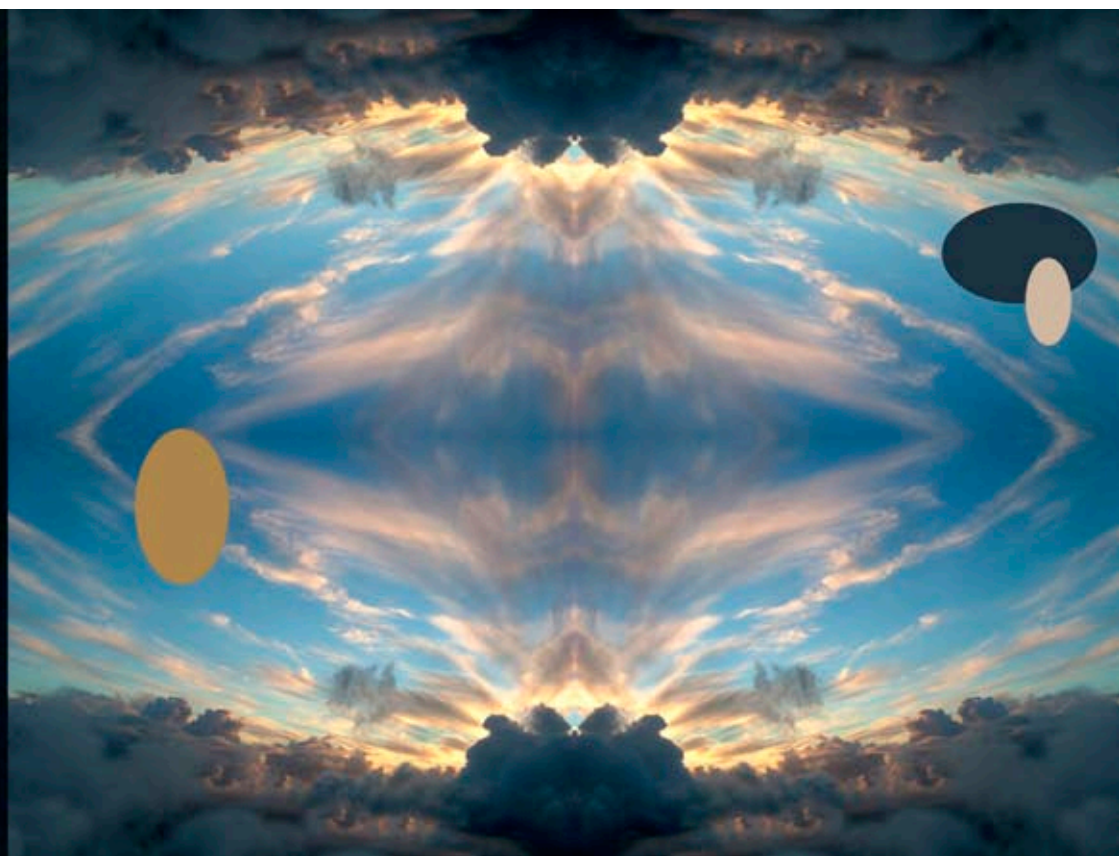
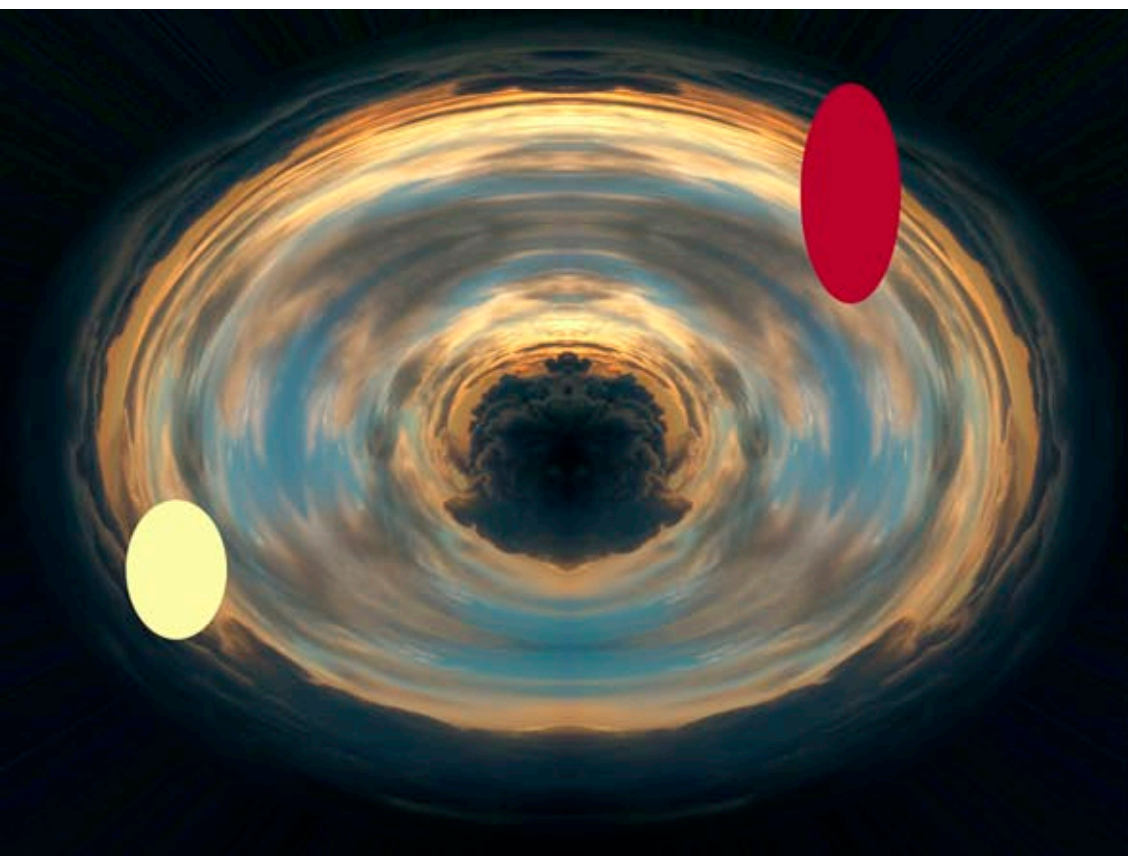
Self portrait (detail), 2003
 Installation, drawing on wall
 in IV Bienal do MERCOSUR,
 Porto Alegre, Brazil

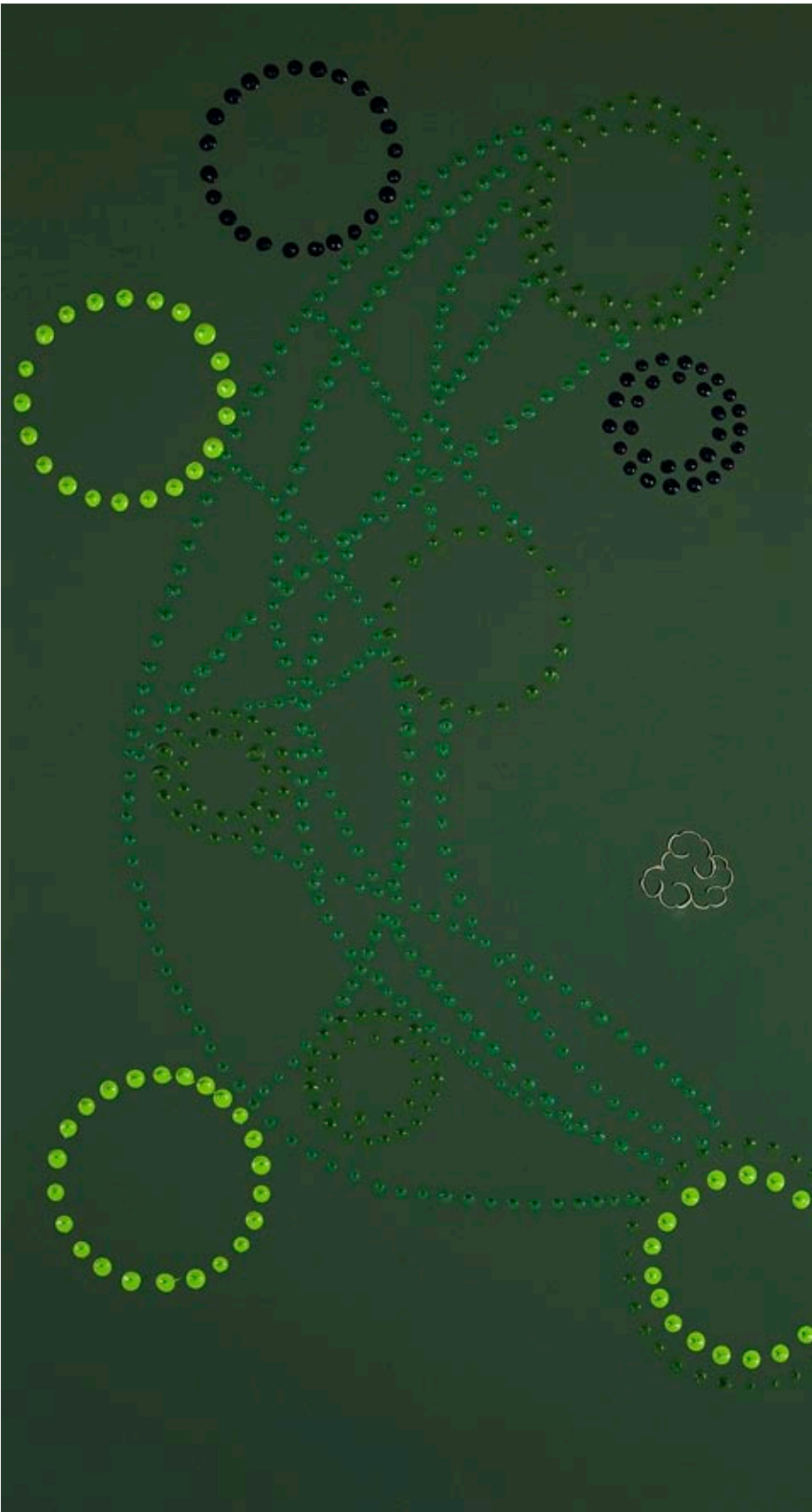
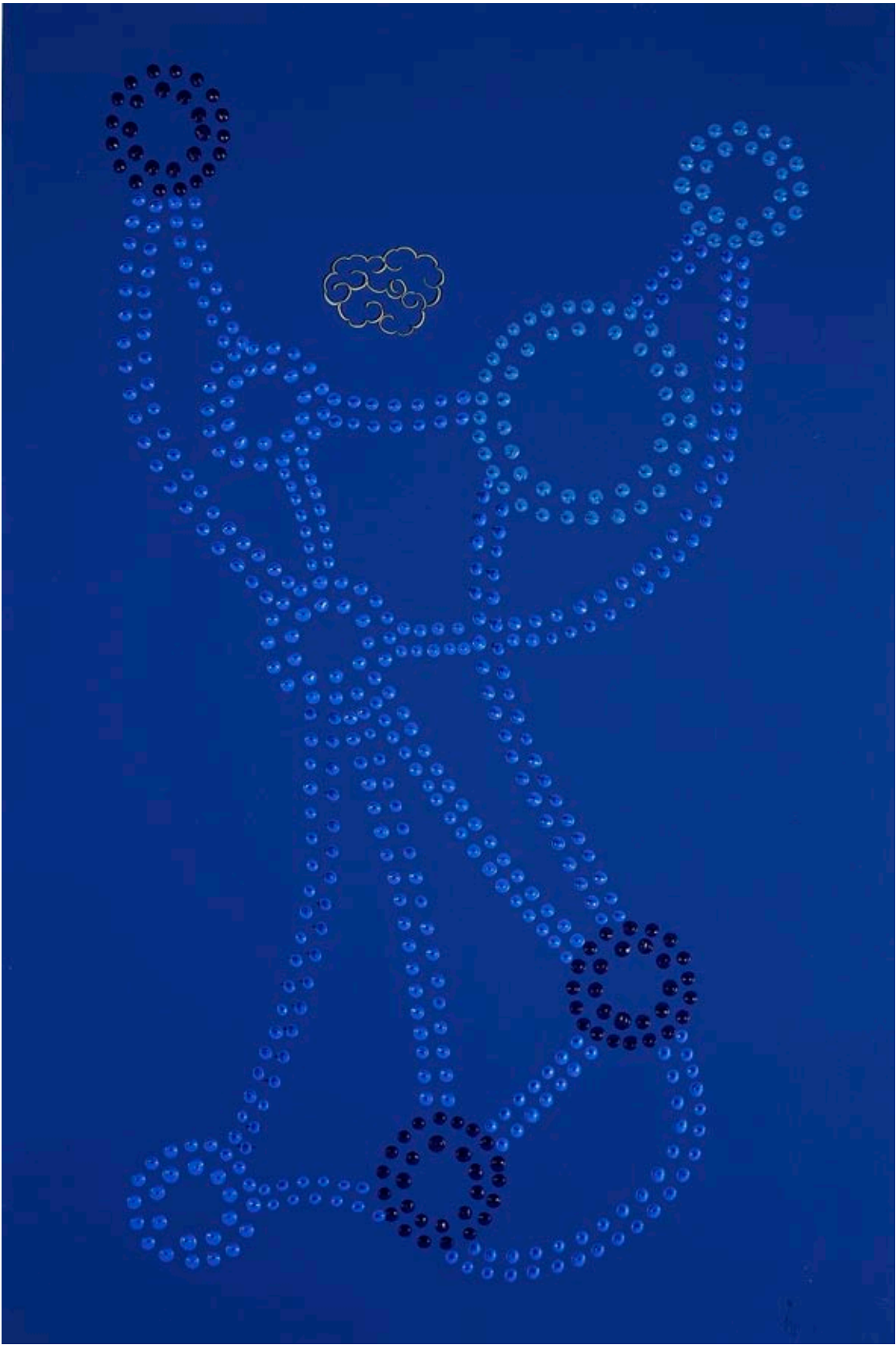


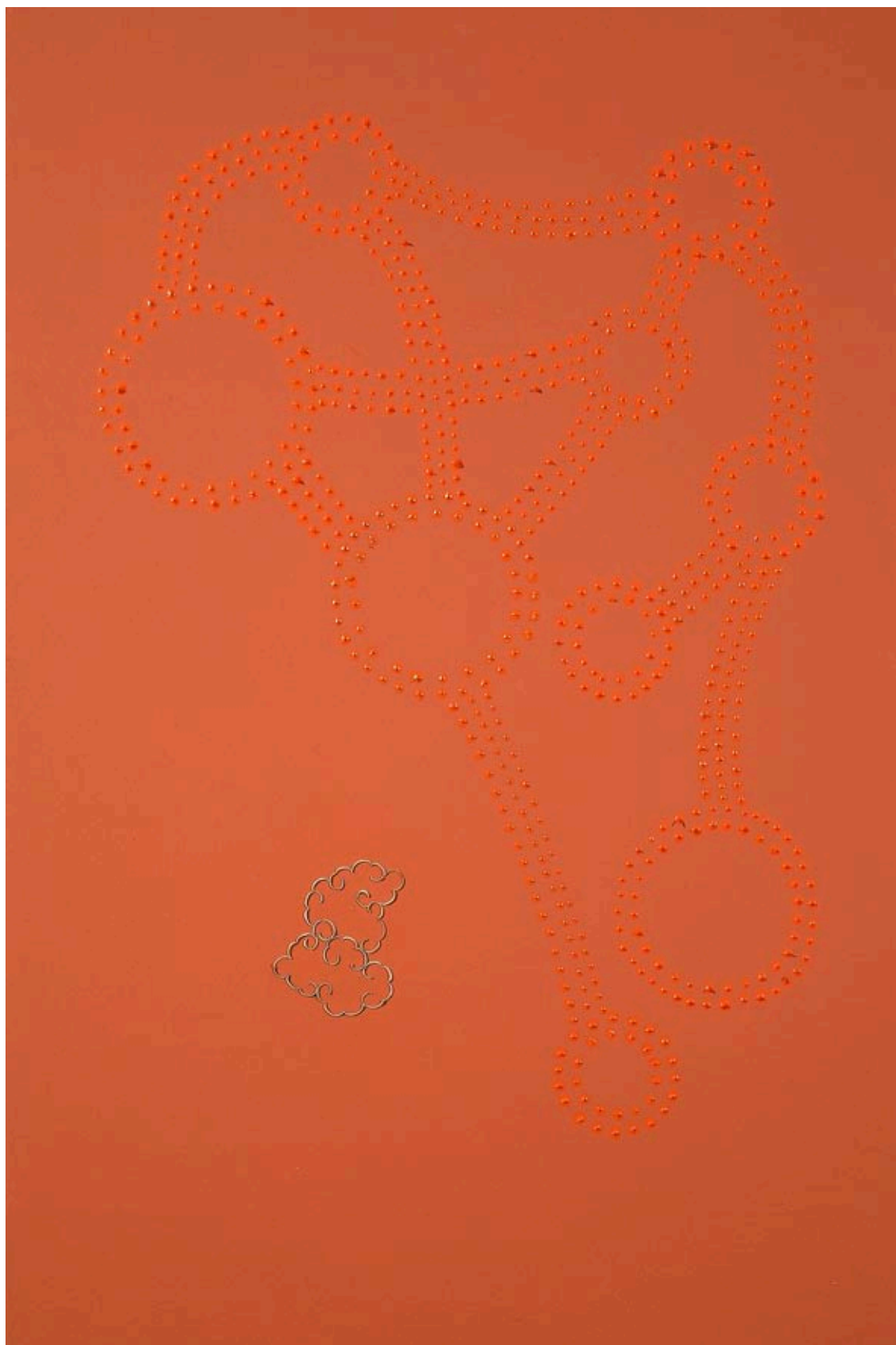


La pintura, Homage to Piero della Francesca I-VI, 2004
 Six digital images in light boxes, 37 x 100 cm each
 Edited by Arte & Naturaleza, Madrid, Spain
 Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales Collection, Montevideo, Uruguay









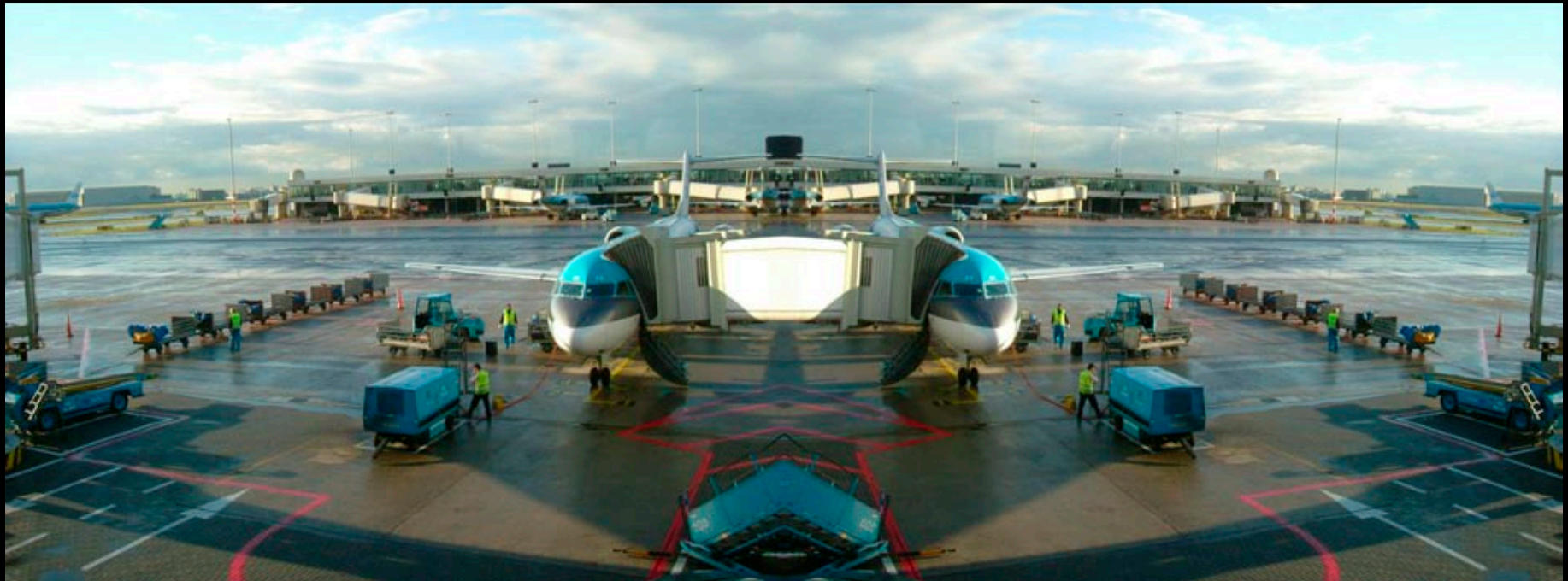
Triptych, 2003
Acrylic and finger nail cuttings on
wooden panels, 100 x 150 cm



Ceci n'est pas un video, 2004
48 digital images in three frames
as shown at Moderna Muséet,
Stockholm, Sweden



do you love me?



Content arising from the work's relationships with art history



content arising from participation in specific iconographic tradition



not that it really matters



room service



intrinsic value



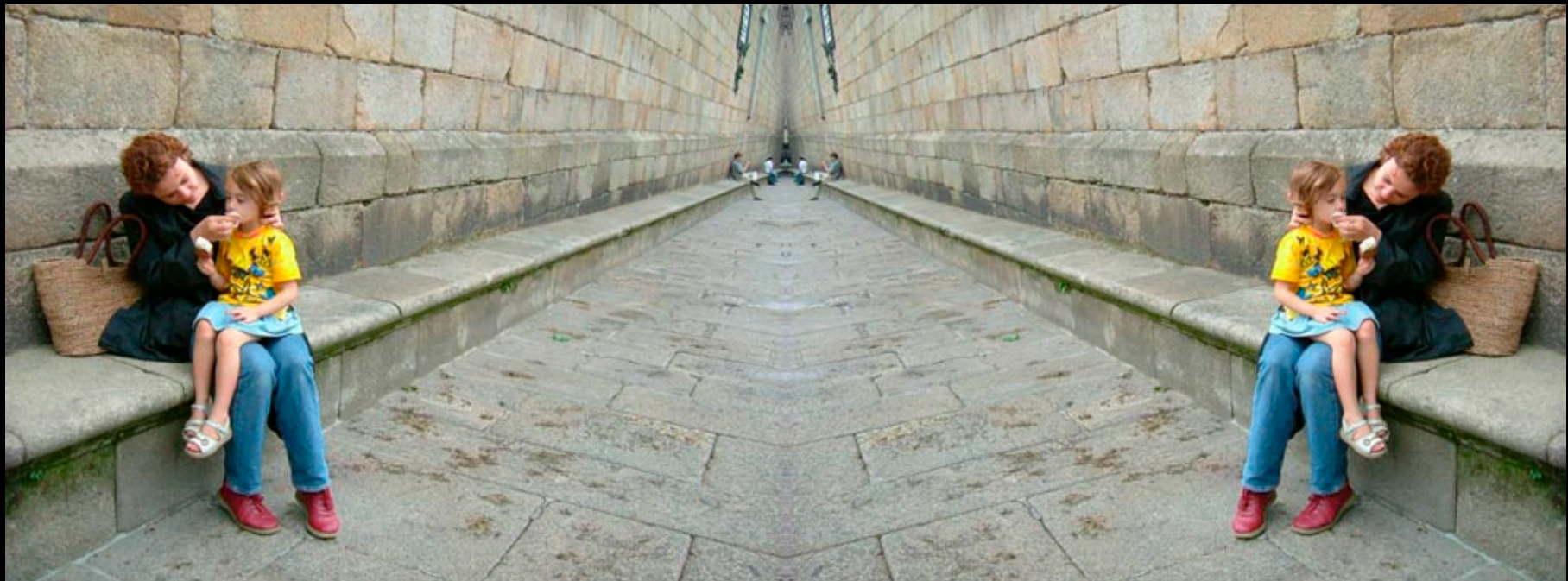
the pleasure is all mine



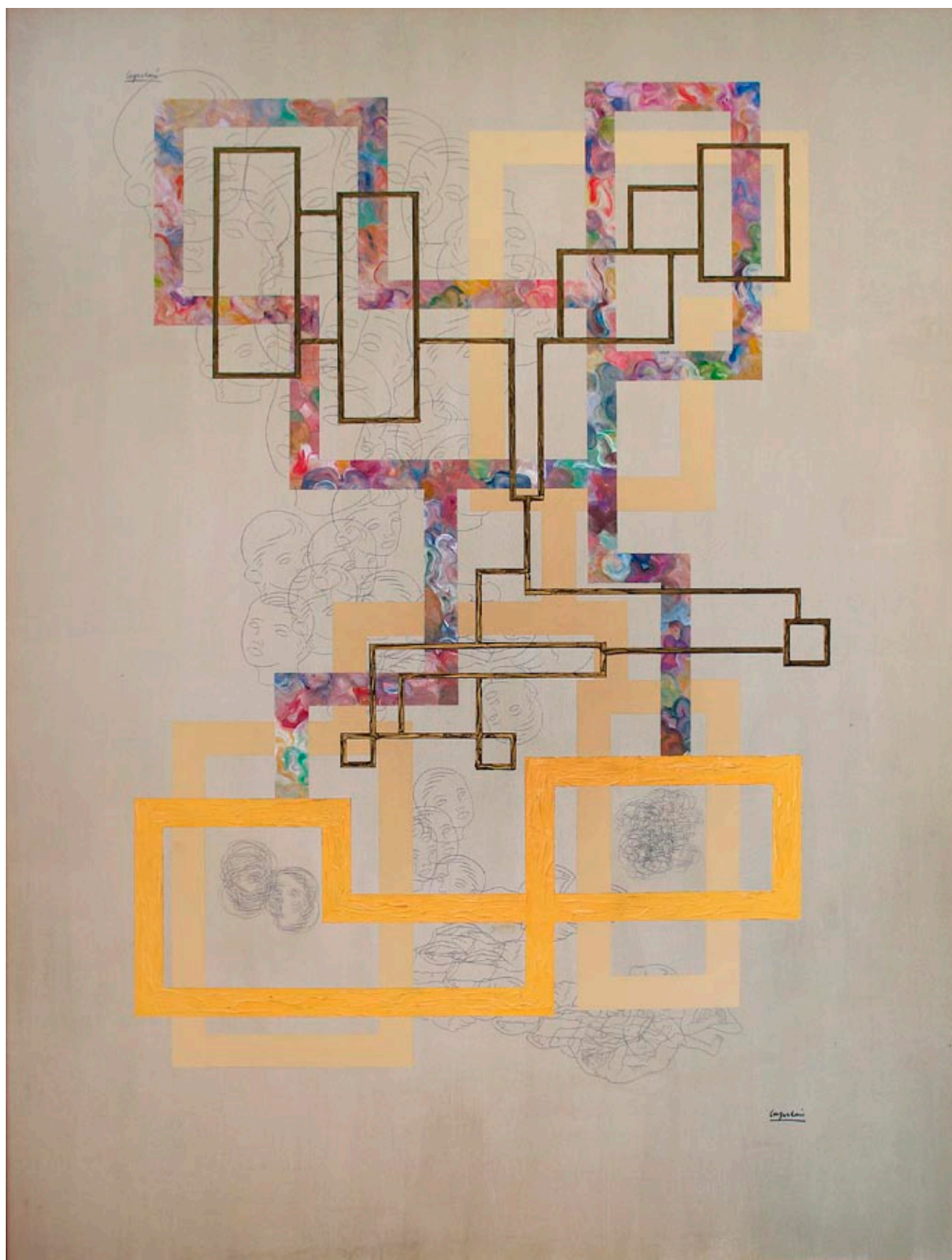
Content arising from the material of which the art work is made



visual perception can be altered while the object itself remains unaltered



natural emergence



Painting, 2003

Acrylic and pencil on
canvas, 220 x 167 cm.
Daniel Yankelwitz
Collection, San José,
Costa Rica



Painting, 2006
 Acrylic on paper
 90 x 70 cm.
 Jaime del Hierro
 Collection
 Guayaquil, Ecuador

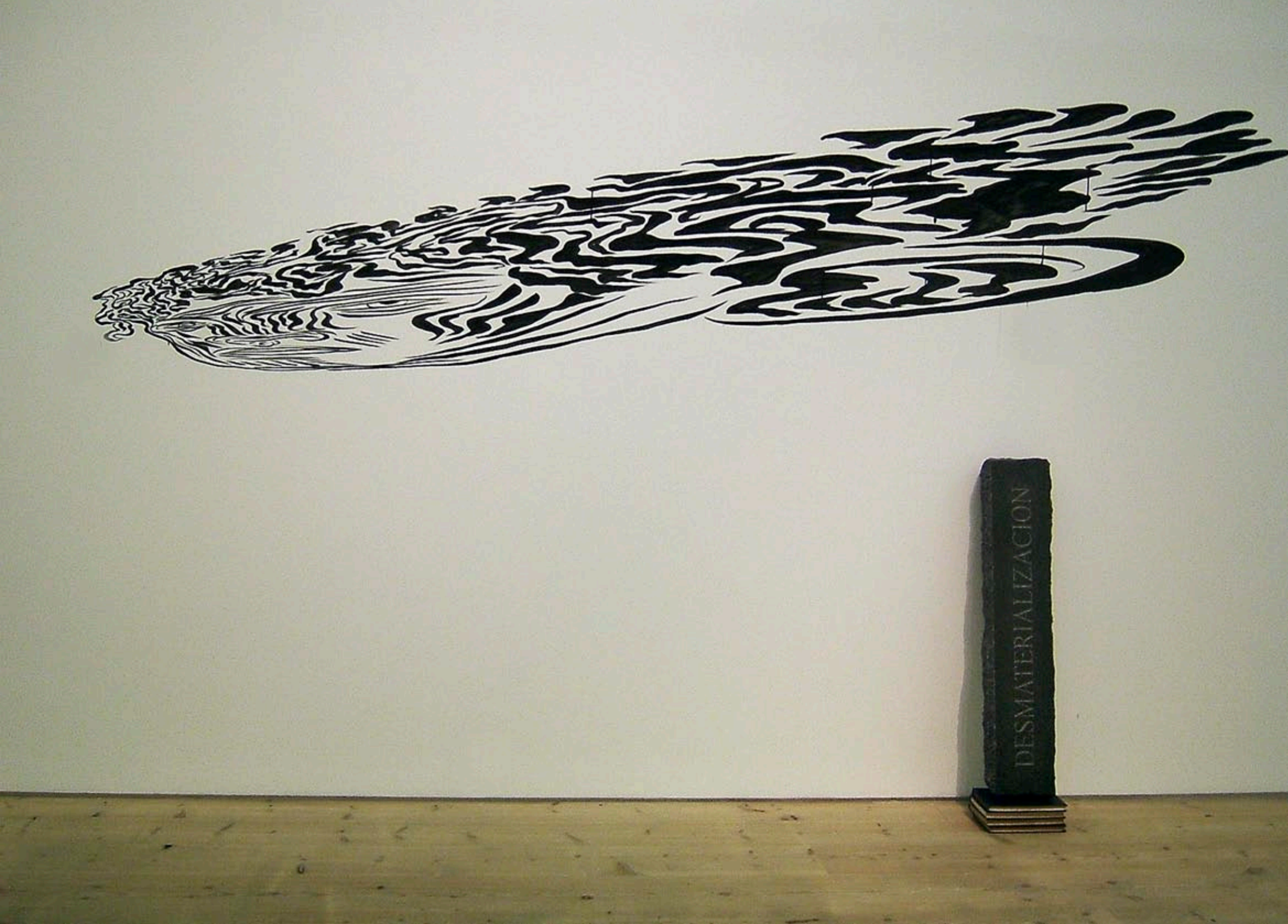


My Avant-garde is bigger than yours, 2004
Digital image

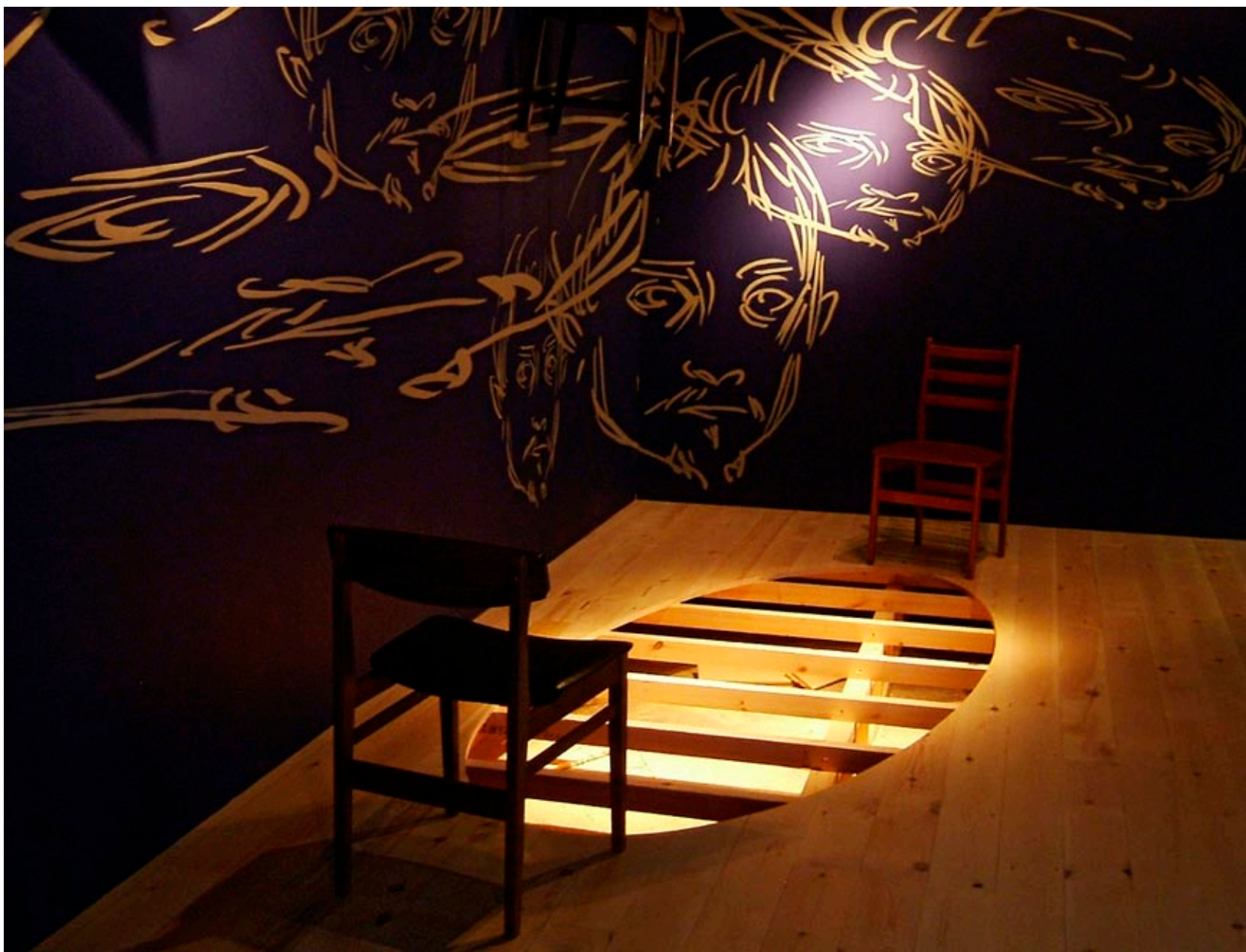


S GRANDE QUE LA TUYA





Dematerialization/Rematerialization, 2004
Installation
As shown at Baltic Mill, Newcastle, UK



onlyyou, 2004
Installation
Baltic Mill, Newcastle, UK

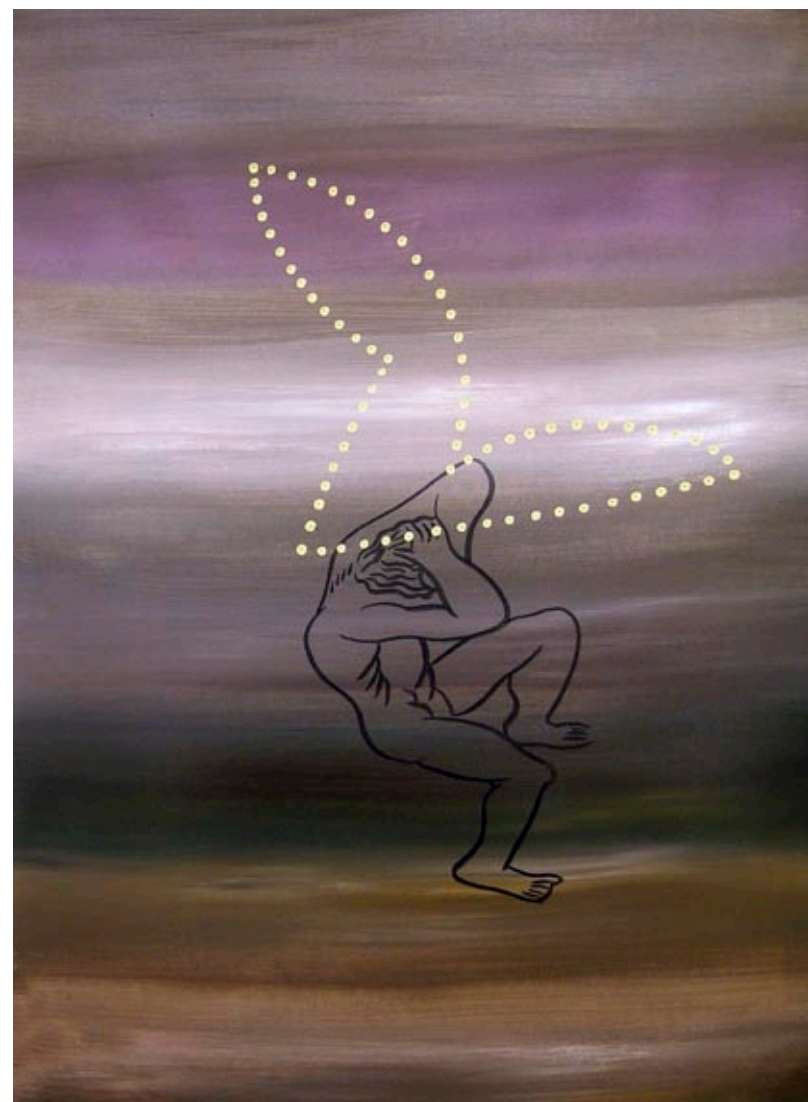
Homage to Tatlin, onlyyou, 2004
Installation
Baltic Mill, Newcastle, UK





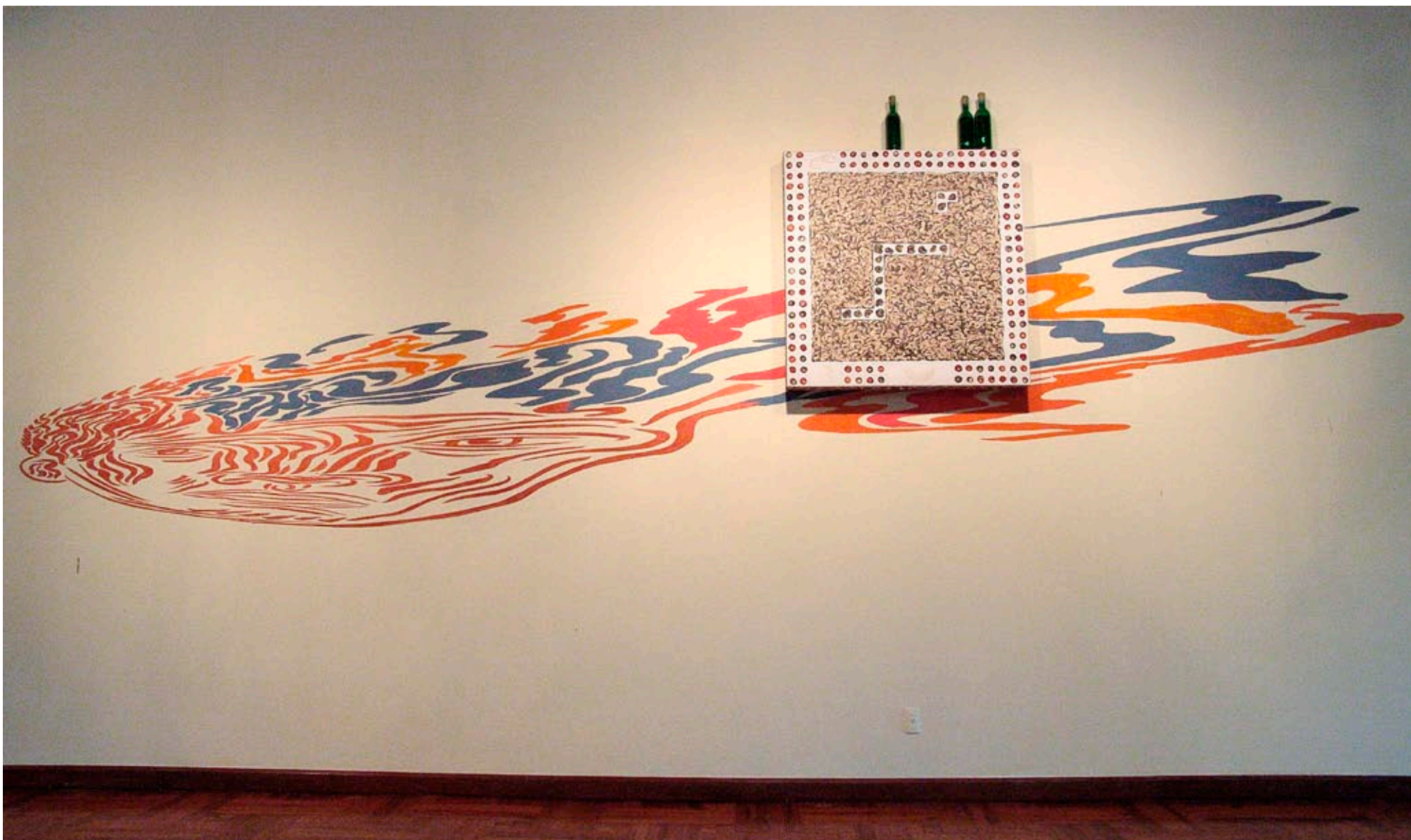


Painting, 2005
 Graphite and acrylic on canvas, 206 x 147 cm.
 Private collection, Costa Rica



Painting, 2005
 Acrylic on paper and holes, 100 x 70 cm.

Painting, 2005
 Acrylic on paper, 100 x 70 cm.



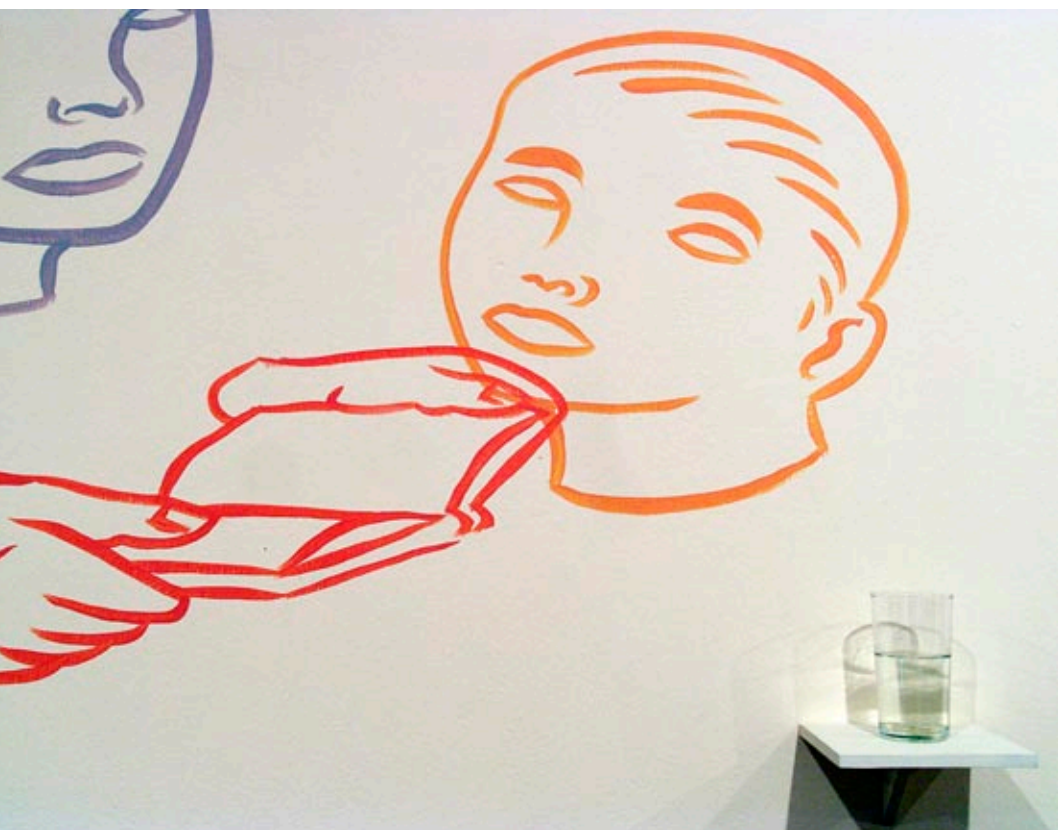
Painting, 2005

Anamorphic figure on wall, painting on canvas and bottles
onlyyou, A Certain Notion of Place,
Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales,
Montevideo, Uruguay

Horizon, 2005

Installation,
onlyyou, A Certain Notion of Place,
Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales,
Montevideo, Uruguay

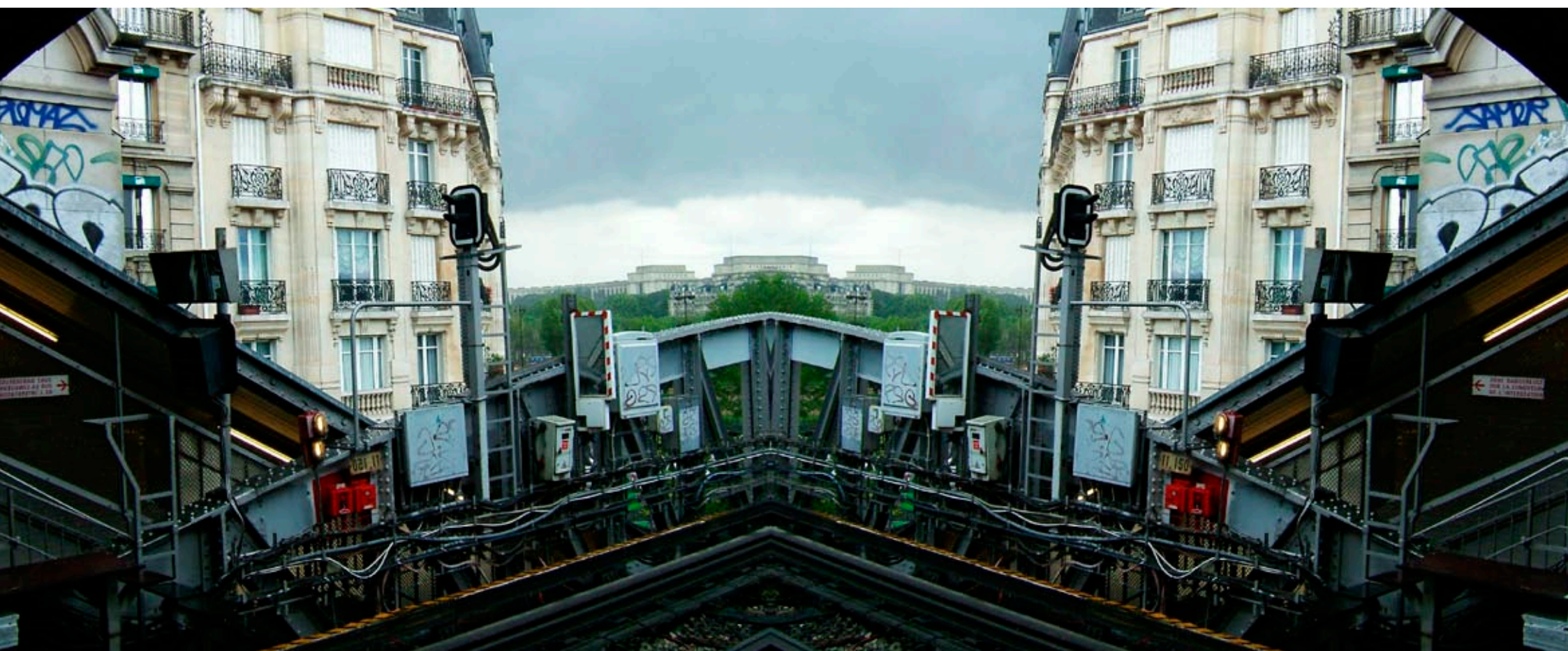




Horizon, 2005
Installation,
onlyyou, A Certain Notion of Place,
Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales,
Montevideo, Uruguay

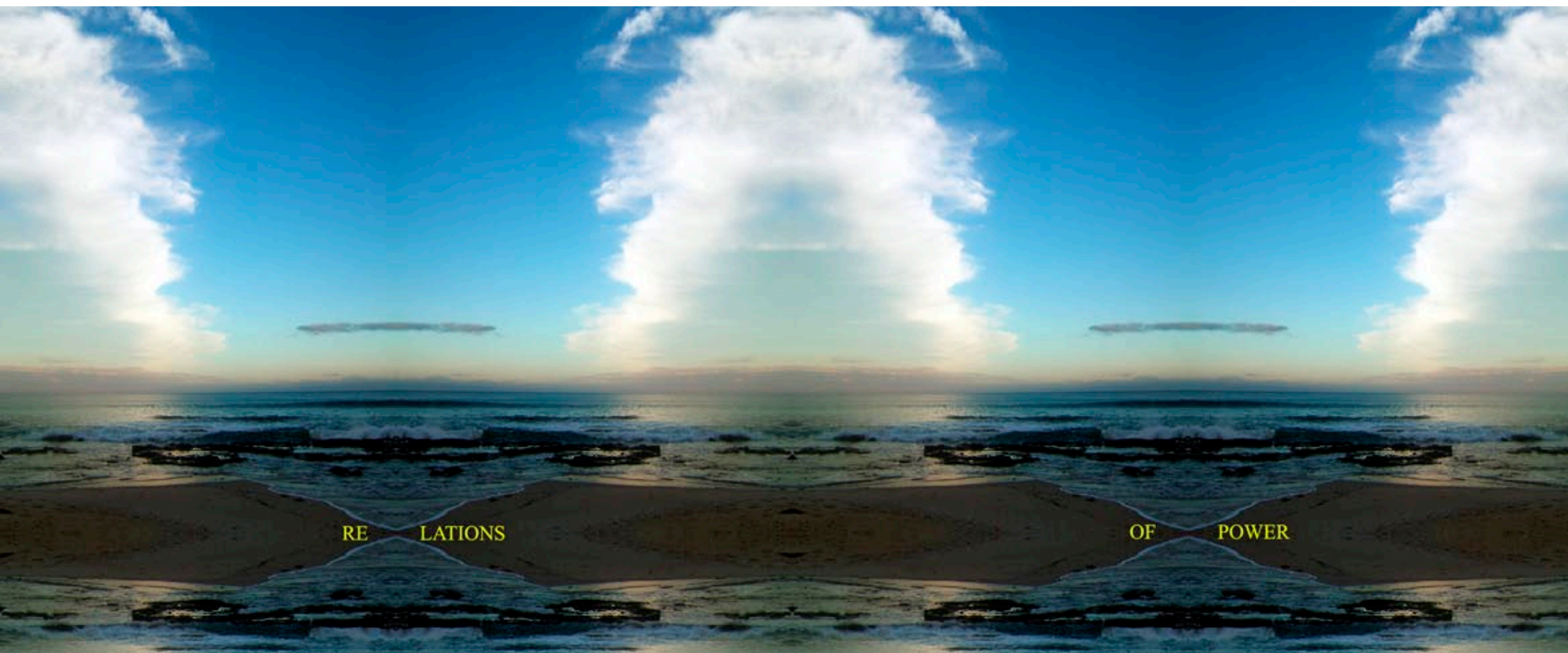
Painting, 2005
Acrylic on canvas, 206 x 147 cm.
Private collection, Madrid, Spain





No title, from the serie Do natives
have a soul?, 2004
Digital photography

Relations of power, from the serie Do
natives have a soul?, 2004
Digital photography





15 42
98 07



39 70
23 44



02 81
15 29



39 70
78 51



**No title, from the
serie Do natives have
a soul?, 2004**
Digital photography

Painting, 2005
Acrylic and pencil
on canvas, 206 x
147 cm.
Private collection,
Costa Rica







onlyyou, There was nobody there, 2005

Installation, marble sculptures from the museum's collection, a showcase with fingernail cuttings, a bronze sculpture, 400 china plates and 32 engraved stones with the words: dematerialization/rematerialization, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago, Chile





ONLYYOU PROJECT, CHILE:

In the year 2005 I was invited to exhibit at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Chile. Little did those who invited me know that the artist had, during his last stay in Chile, been a "desaparecido", a name given to those who were taken prisoners during the military coup of 1973 without being listed in the records.

The curious passage, from being a "desaparecido" and driven out of the country to being formally invited to exhibit in its national museum I felt as a proposal to face the topic of de-materialization and rematerialization. In this particular case my private persona was to be involved in a secondary level of reading.

First I got the necessary authorisation to regroup the museum's marble sculptures that I remembered well from 1973. These sculptures used to stand dusty in a corner in the entrance hall. They were arranged in groups, and were collectively headed by a copy of the Apollo Belvedere which lavishly received the visitor at the door (the Apollo Belvedere was considered a canonic piece during the last 400 years, as an example of Greek classicism. Recent investigations determined that the Apollo was actually a late piece of the hellenistic period which rendered a mediocre representation of ancient classicism.)

Thirty two stones (one for each year of absence), inscribed with either DESMATERIALIZACIÓN or REMATERIALIZACIÓN, were placed on top of piles of china plates. fastened to the ceiling from a twenty two metre-long rope hung a bronze cast of the artist's hand at the height where a raised fist might be.

In two glass showcases drawings of clouds fashioned with the artist's nails were shown.

The personal references implied in the piece were not made public until the time when the exhibit was opened.

The project continued in a second part carried out in the Galería Metropolitana. It was a three day performance during which I slept on the floor of the gallery space, as I once did in the Estadio Nacional as a prisoner.

During those three days there were meetings, meals and conversations with writers, old political prisoners, artists, students, friends and locals from the neighbourhood of Pedro Aguirre Cerda where the Galería Metropolitana is situated.

To all those who approached the scene a masseur and a fortuneteller were available.

The exhibition at the Museo de Bellas Artes and the action carried out at the Galería Metropolitana were both conceived as parts of one piece only. The apparent dissociation between the two was only that: apparent.

Carlos Capelán





**onlyyou, And there there was
somebody, 2005**

Three days eating, talking and sleeping
Galeria Metropolitana, Santiago, Chile



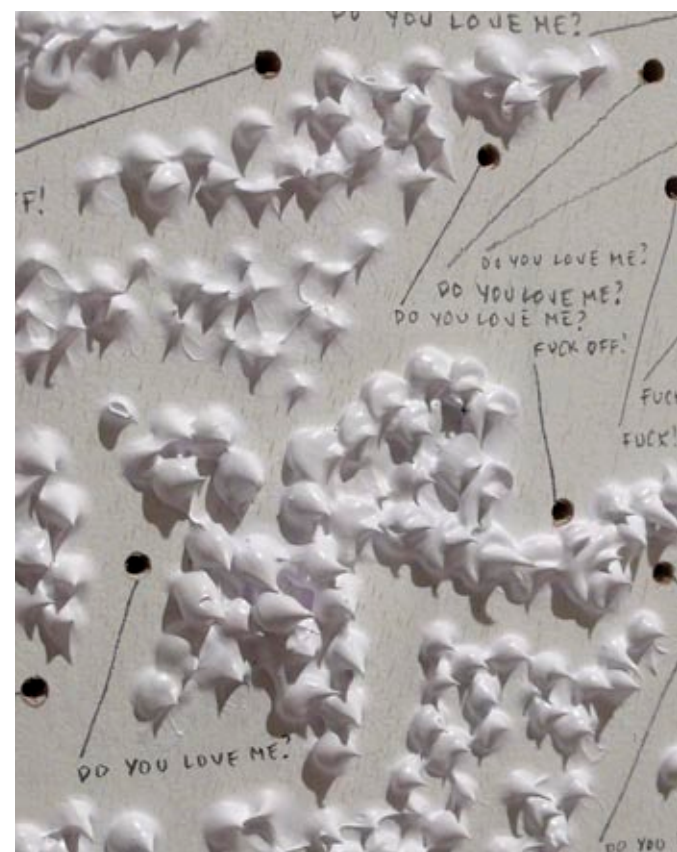
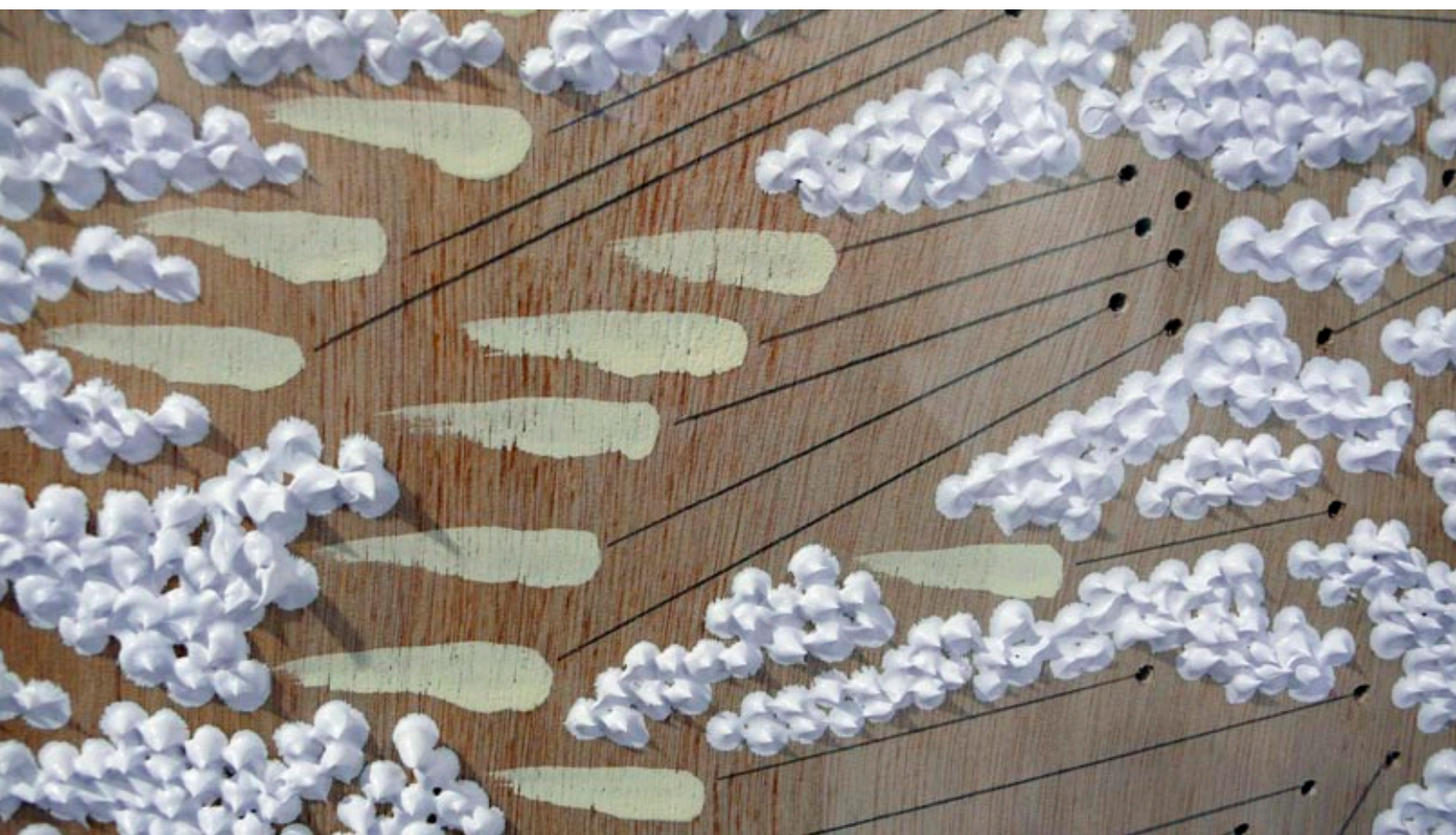


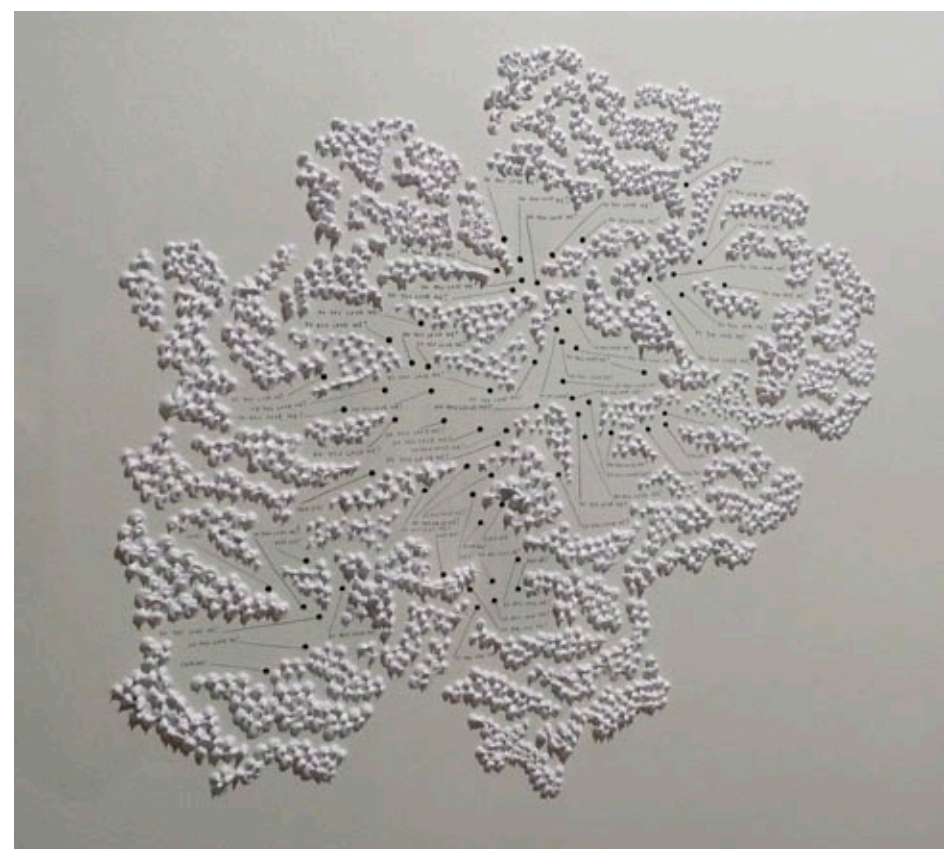
A Few Words, 2006
 Installation
 Galerie Leger, Malmö, Sweden





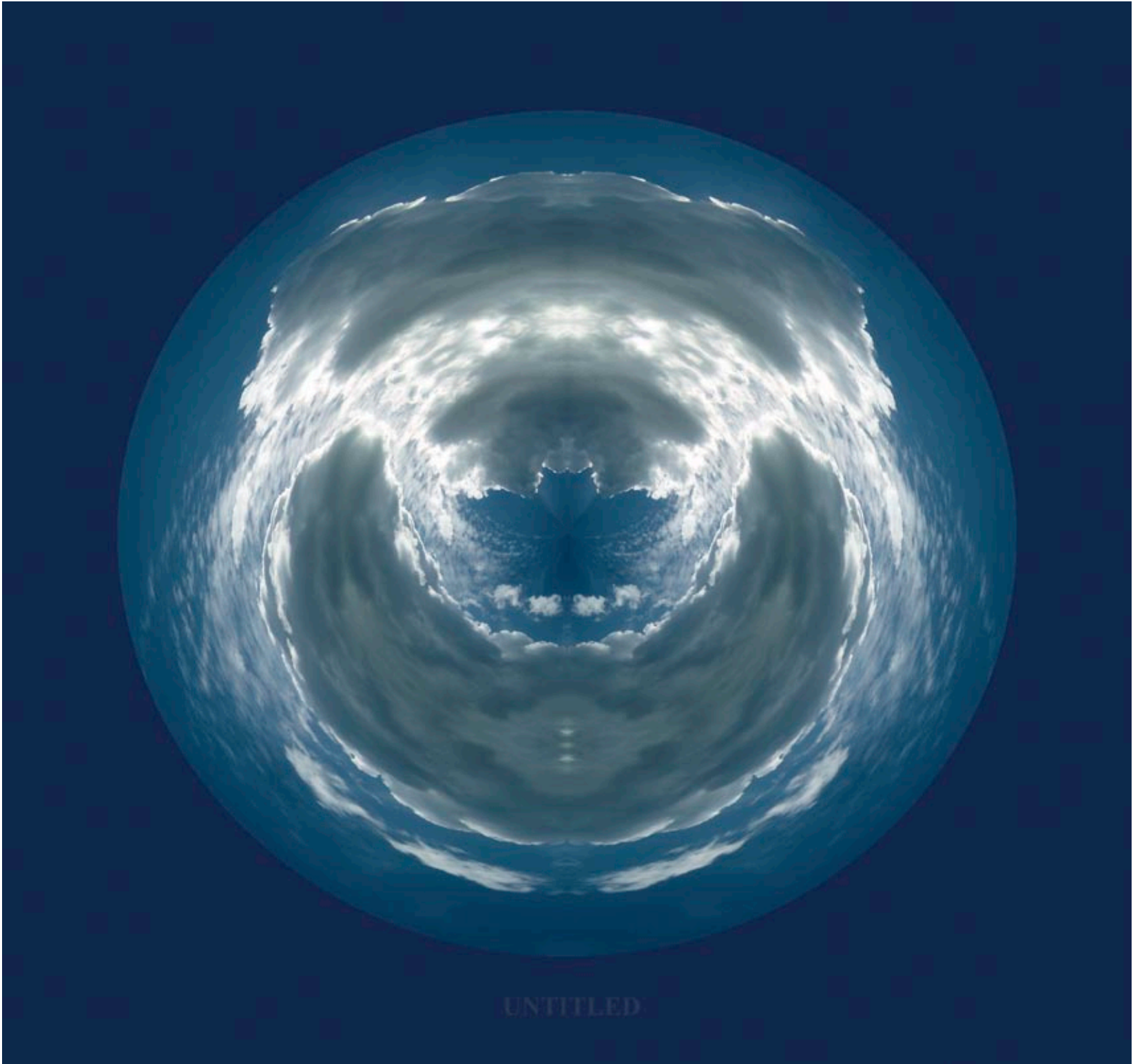
A Few Words, 2006
Installation
Galerie Leger, Malmoe, Sweden

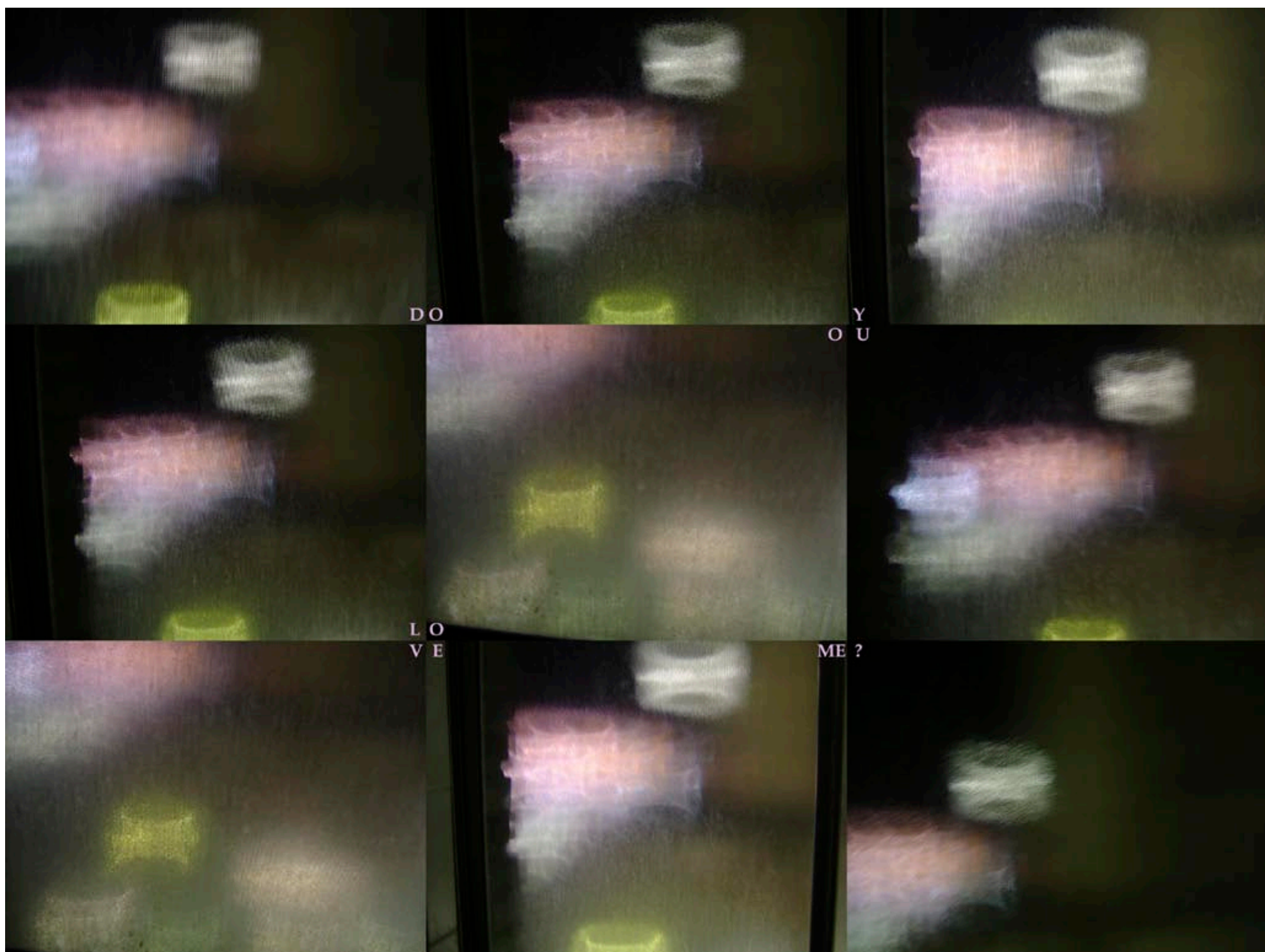




Geography II (details), 1996
Acrylic and pencil on wooden panel

Geography I, 1996
Painting, acrylic and pencil on wooden panel, 100 x 100 cm



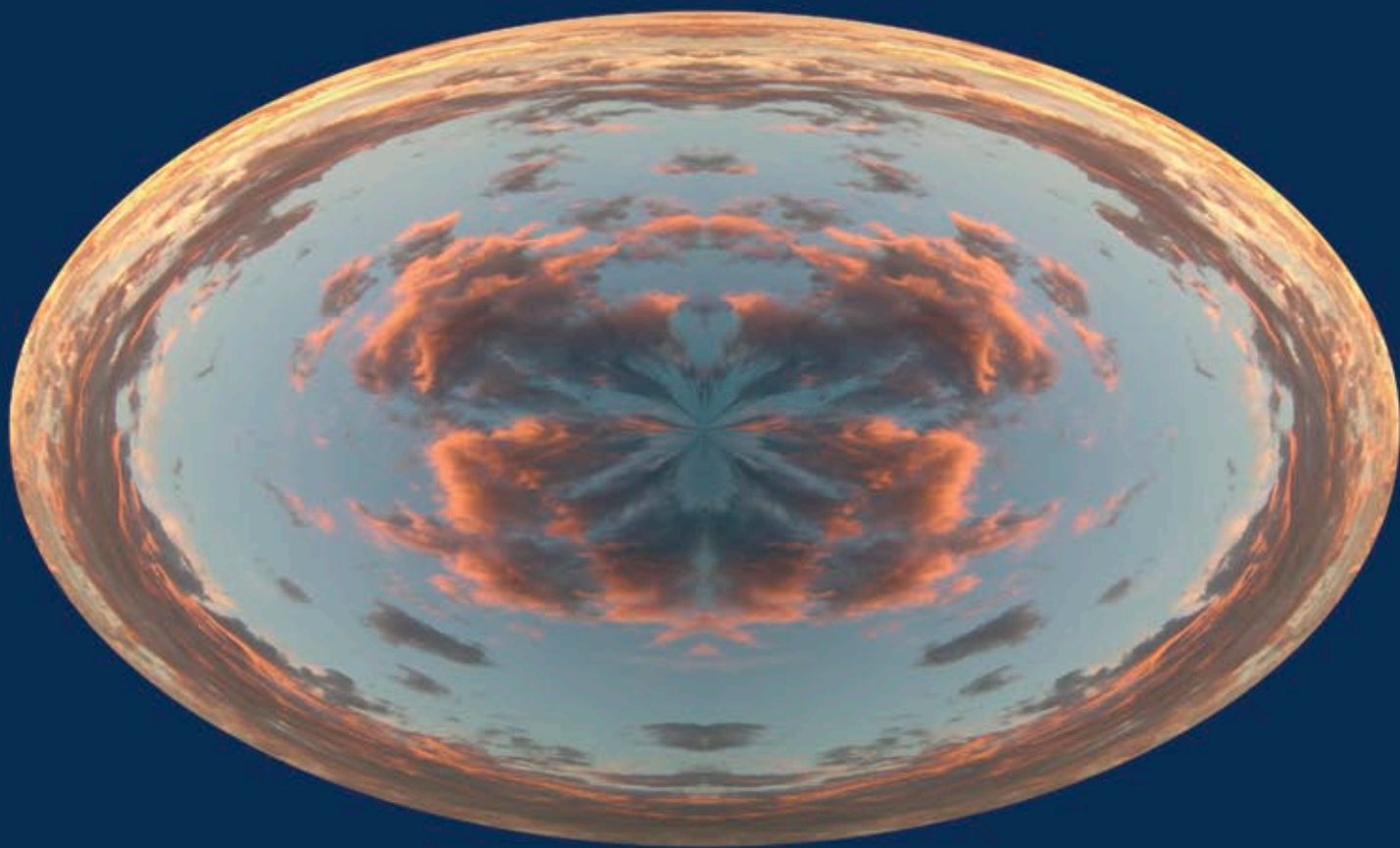


Untitled, from the series A Few Words, 2004

Digital image printed on watercolor paper, 85 x 90 cm
Printed by Lasse Saldert, Helsingborg, Sweden

Do you love me? from the series A Few Words, 2005

Digital image printed on watercolor paper, 100 x 133 cm
Printed by Lasse Saldert, Helsingborg, Sweden



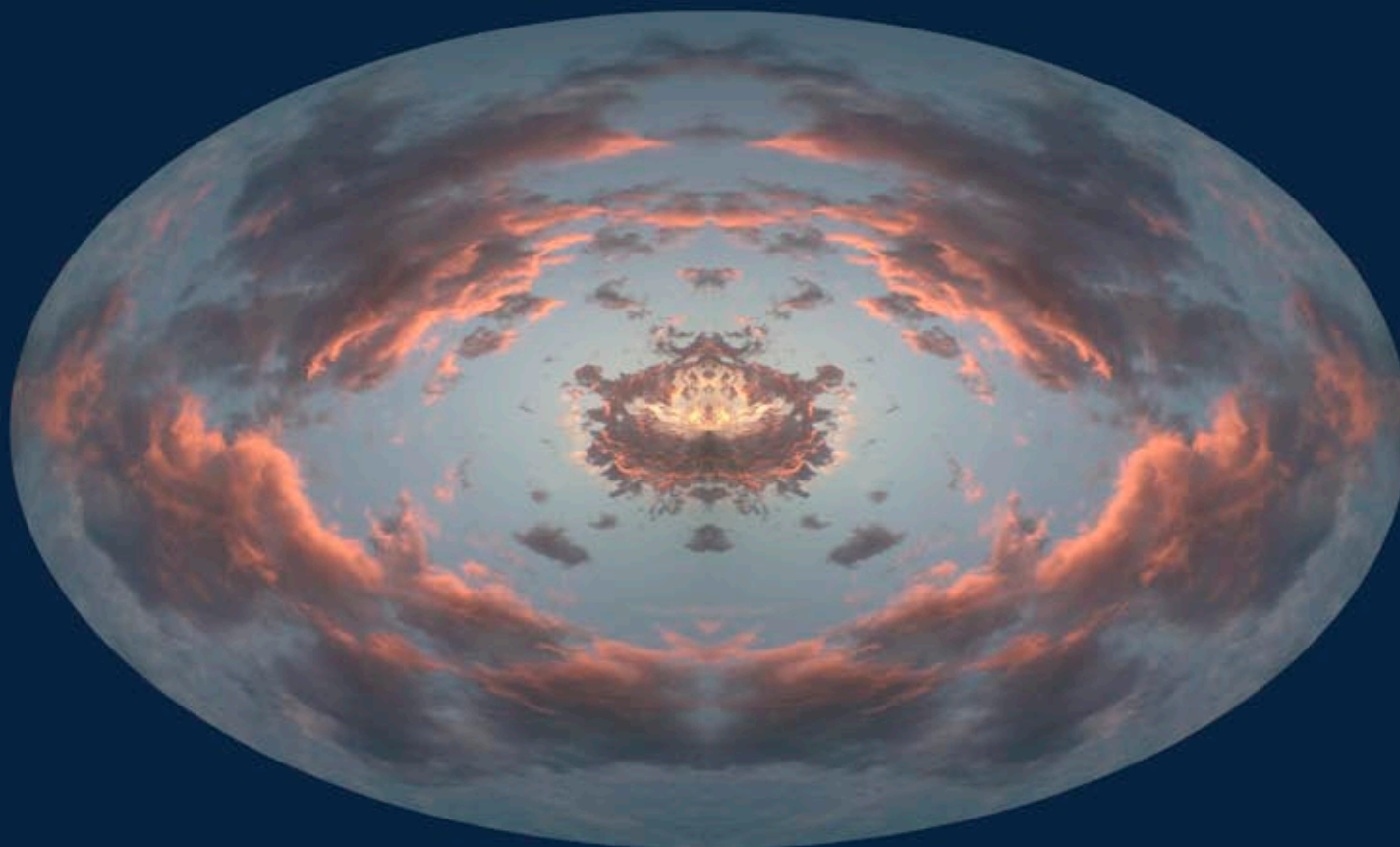
BEYOND LOVE

Beyond Love, from the series A Few Words, 2005

Digital image printed on watercolor paper, 90 x 150 cm
Printed by Lasse Saldert, Helsingborg, Sweden

No Pain No Gain, from the series A Few Words, 2005

Digital image printed on watercolor paper, 90 x 150 cm
Printed by Lasse Saldert, Helsingborg, Sweden



NO PAIN NO GAIN



(R) EM
ER



AT
IA



LI
TI



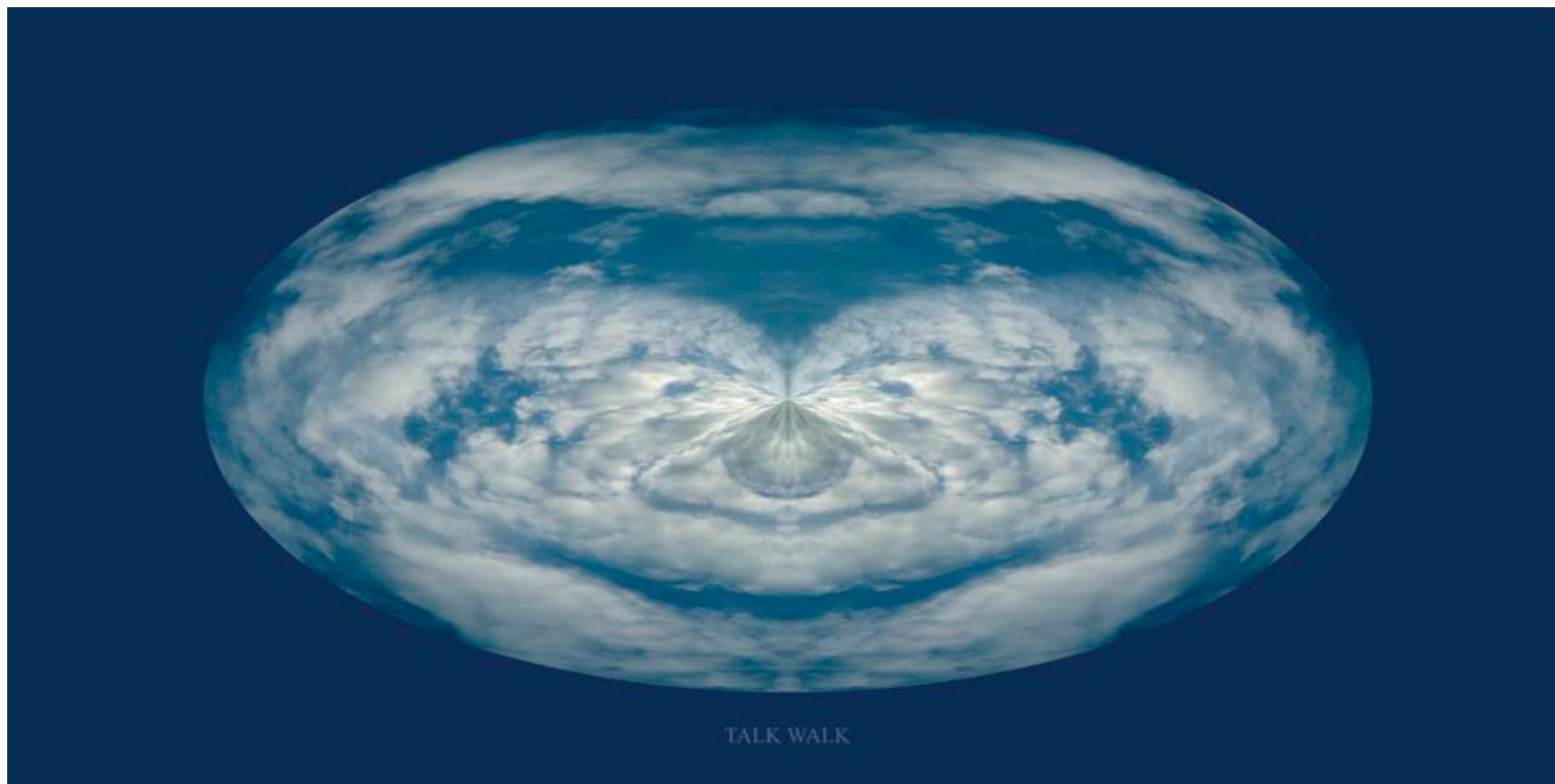
ZA
ON





Rematerialization, from the series A Few Words, 2005
 Digital image printed on watercolor paper, 100 x 100 cm
 Printed by Lasse Saldert, Helsingborg, Sweden
 José Lloreda Collection, Colombia

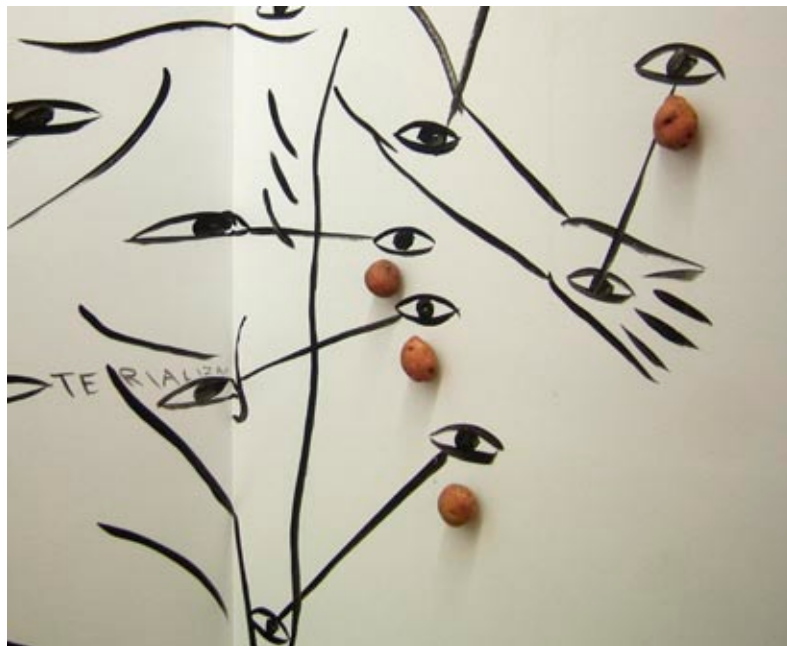
This is not made in China, from the series A Few Words, 2005
 Digital image printed on watercolor paper, 90 x 150 cm
 Printed by Lasse Saldert, Helsingborg, Sweden
 Museo de Arte y Diseño Costarricense (MADC) Collection, Costa Rica



Walk Talk, from the series A Few Words, 2005
 Digital image printed on watercolor paper, 100 x 150 cm
 Printed by Lasse Saldert, Helsingborg, Sweden
 Museo de Arte y Diseño Costarricense (MADC) Collection, Costa Rica

youoy, from the series A Few Words, 2005
 Digital image printed on watercolor paper, 112 x 150 cm
 Printed by Lasse Saldert, Helsingborg, Sweden







Back to horizon (detail), onlyyou 2006
 Installation
 Museo de Antropología y Arte Contemporáneo (MAAC), Guayaquil, Ecuador

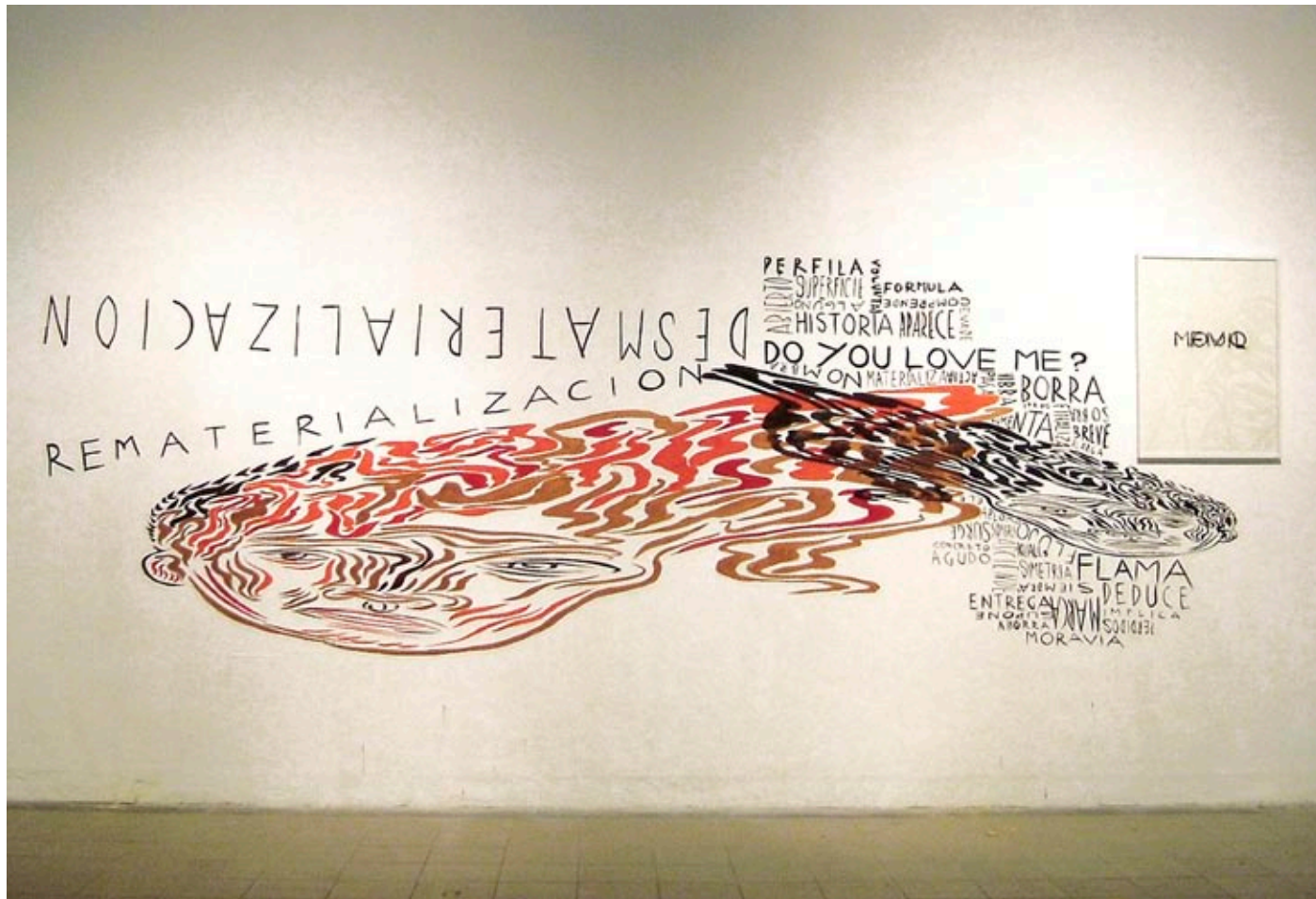
Back to horizon, onlyyou 2006
 Installation
 Museo de Antropología y Arte Contemporáneo (MAAC), Guayaquil, Ecuador





Always There, onlyyou, 2006
 Installation
 Museo de Arte y Diseño (MADC),
 San José, Costa Rica

Always There (detail), onlyyou, 2006
 Installation
 Museo de Arte y Diseño (MADC),
 San José, Costa Rica



Rematerialization, 2006

Painting on wall

Always There, onlyyou, Museo de
Arte y Diseño (MADC), San José,
Costa Rica





Mi casa es tu casa, 2006

Object, chair, sticks, glasses of water
Always There, onlyyou, Museo de Arte y
Diseño (MADC), San José, Costa Rica

Bye-bye, 2006

Video projections, framed digital image
and fake videos of the PCLA(r)
Always There, onlyyou, Museo de Arte y
Diseño (MADC), San José, Costa Rica

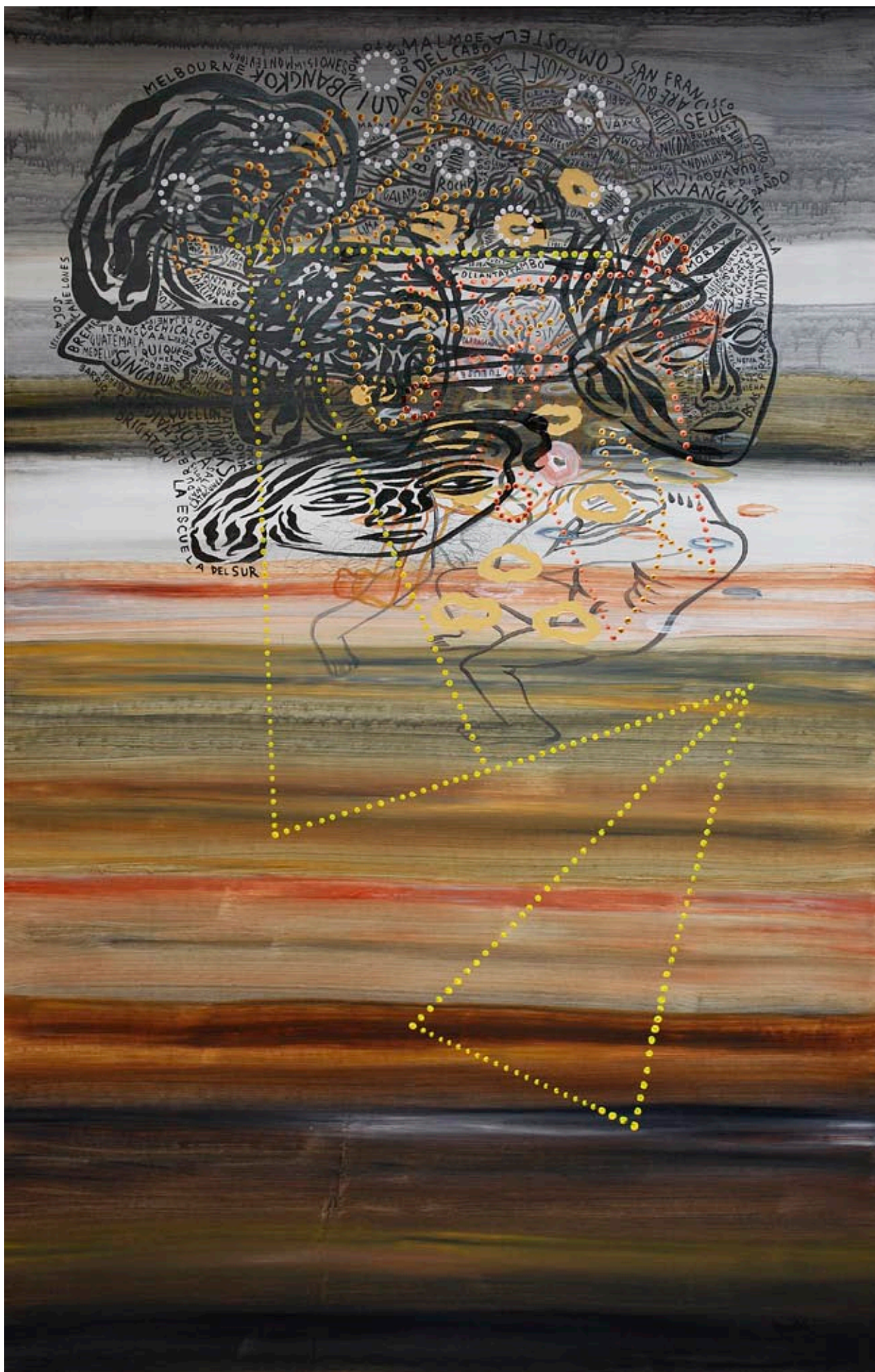


MEMOIR



Speed (movil-fijo), 2006
Charcoal on paper, 100 x 70 cm
Guillermo Conte Collection, San José,
Costa Rica

Rolling Hands, 2006
Bronze sculpture, 150 x 150 x 150 cm
Tony Fage Foundry, Alajuela, Costa Rica
Daniel Yankelwitz Collection, Costa Rica



Painting, 2005

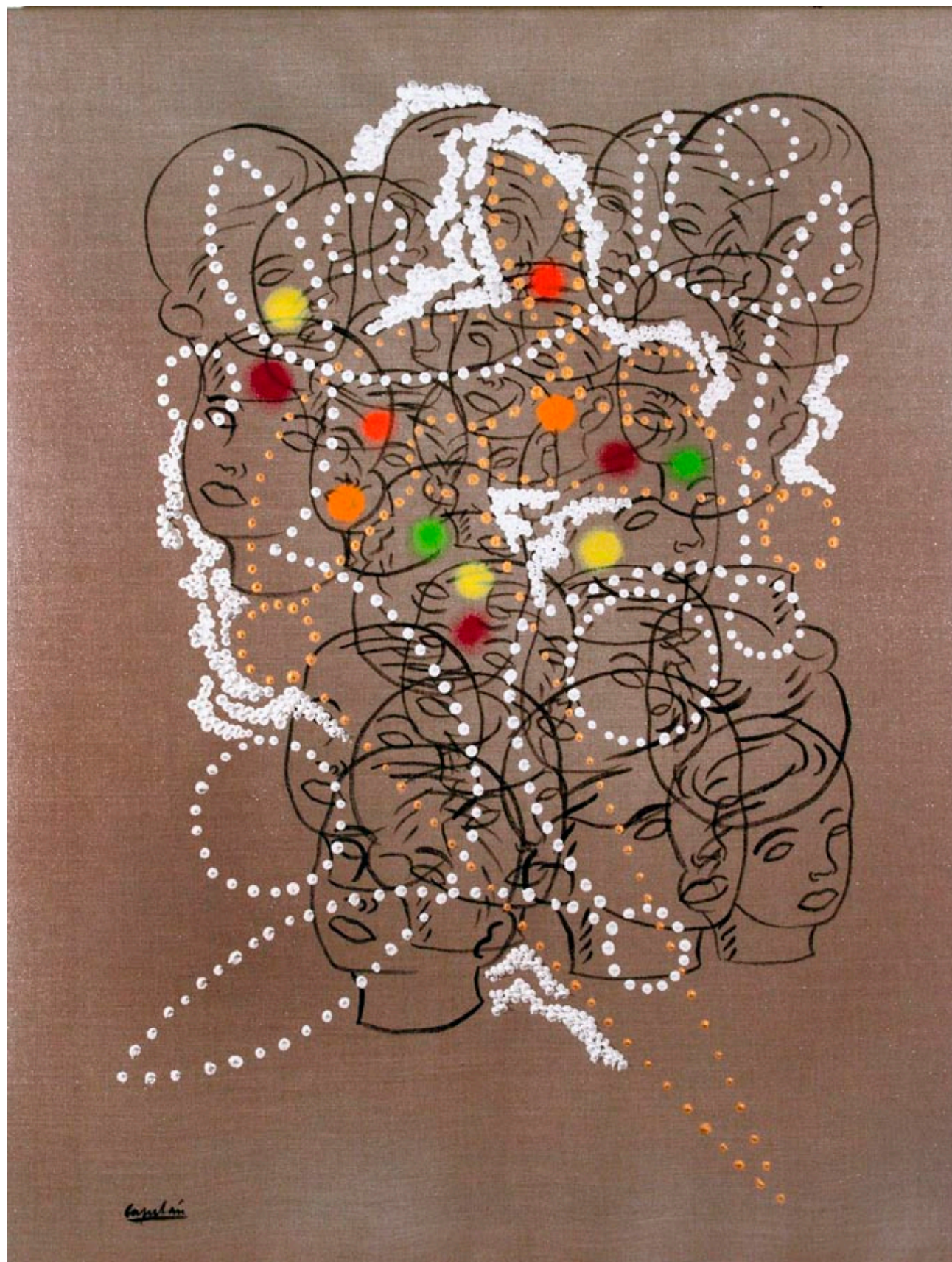
Acrylic on canvas,
200 x 140 cm
Private Collection,
Costa Rica



Painting, 2006
Acrylic on paper,
100 x 70 cm
Private collection

Painting, 2005
 Acrylic on canvas,
 200 x 140 cm.
 Private Collection,
 Costa Rica





Painting, 2004
Acrylic on canvas,
90 x 73 cm
Collection
of the artist



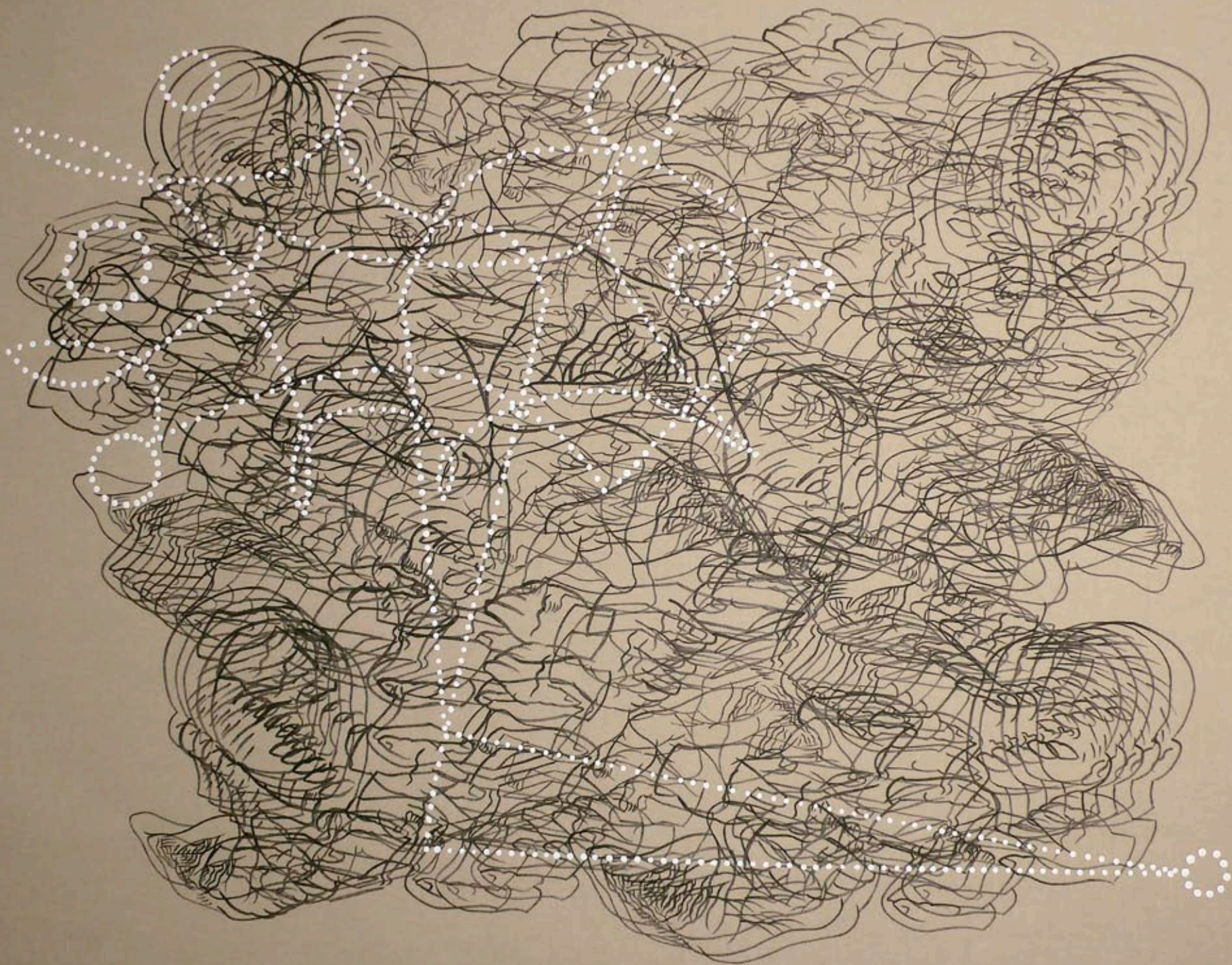
Back to the horizon (detail), 2006
 Indian ink on wall, framed drawings,
 stones and plates
 In Turbulence, 3rd Auckland Triennial
 Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki,
 Auckland, New Zealand

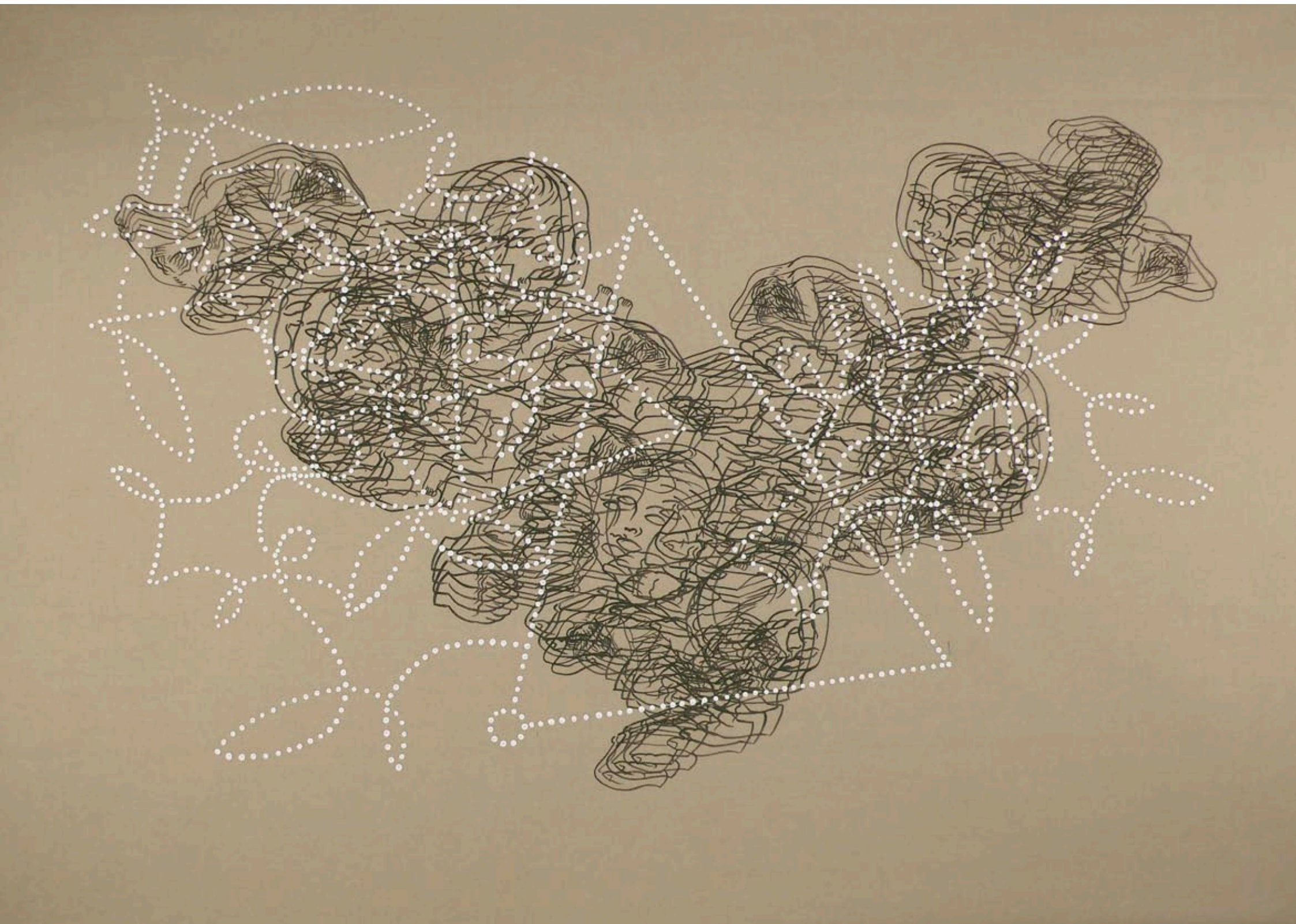




Back to the horizon (detail), 2006
 Indian ink on wall, framed drawings,
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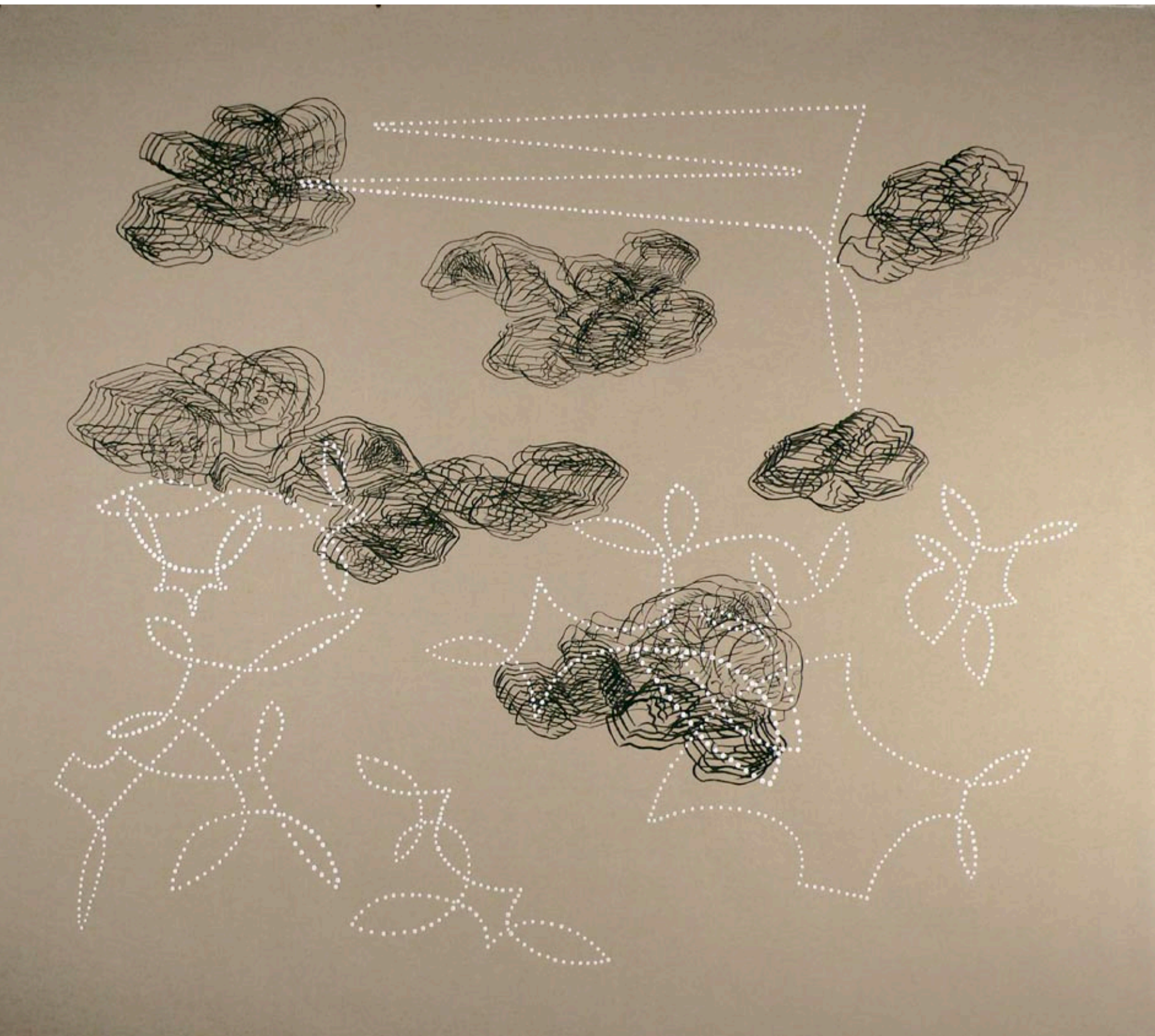


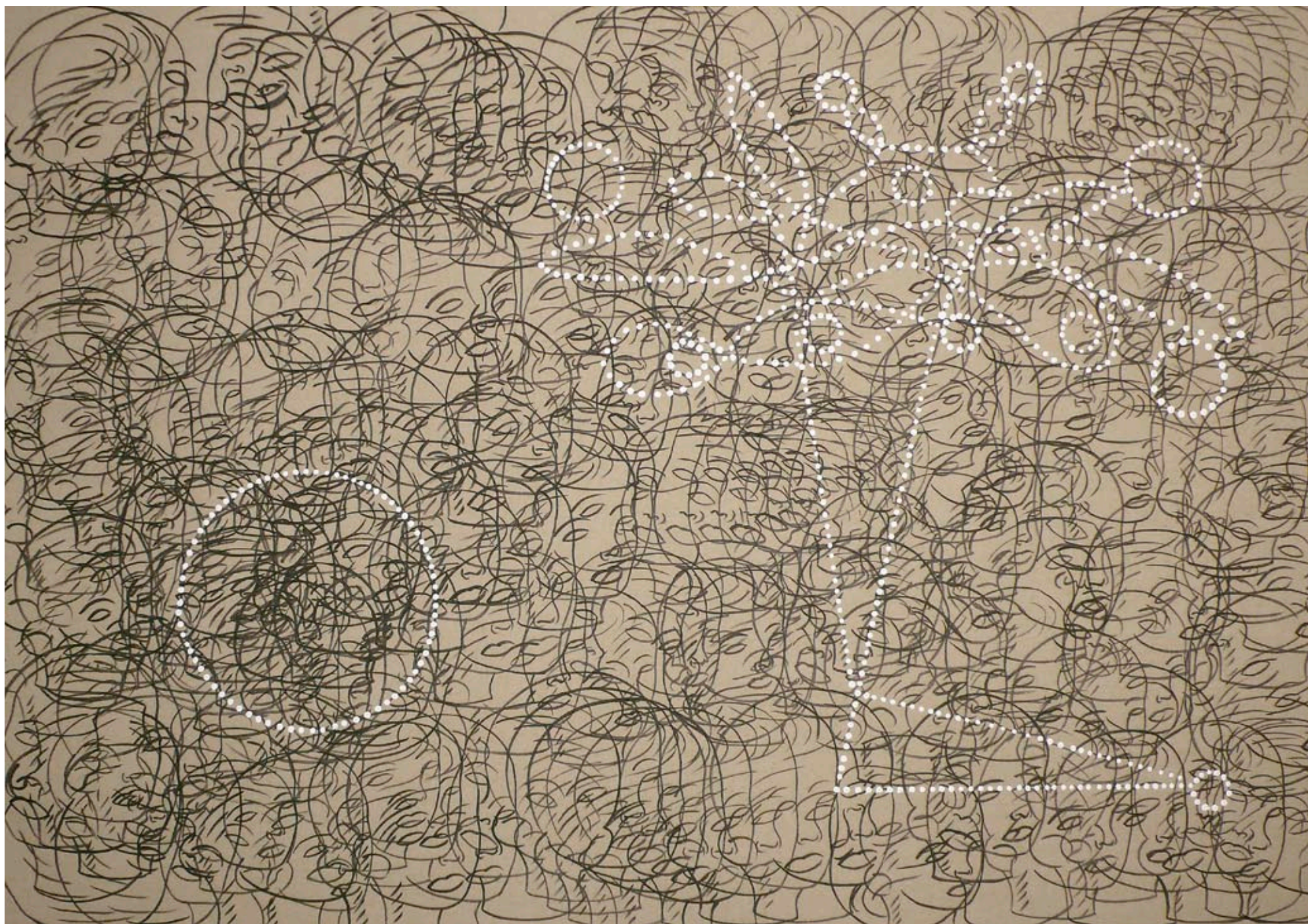




Painting, 2007
Acrylic on canvas, 200 x 210 cm

Painting, 2007
Acrylic on canvas, 200 x 210 cm





Painting, 2007
Acrylic on canvas, 200 x 236 cm

Painting, 2007
Acrylic on canvas, 200 x 210 cm



Painting, 2007
Acrylic and carving
on wooden panel,
100 x 90 cm



Painting, 2007
Acrylic and carving on
wooden panel, 100 x 90 cm
Per Zaunders, Malta



Phoenix/Parihaka, 2007
 Drawing, fifteen drawings
 on paper, 180 x 400 cm aprox

PHOENIX PARIHAKA

Only by awakening can you know the true meaning of that word.
Eckhart Tolle

It is said that the Phoenix represents our capacity to view into the future, for the bird would travel long distances scanning the environment, the activities and events created by humans. The mystical creature's ability to ignite itself in a pyre of aromatic branches and spices in order to be reborn is a powerful image. It helps remind us that even fiery re-awakenings constantly occur in the mythical, physical and spiritual worlds.

In 1881, the hamlet community of Parihaka on the scenic west coast of the North Island of New Zealand agreed to put into effect a sequence of non-violent civil disobedience actions. They removed surveyor pegs from confiscated land, ploughed up surveyed land and removed government built fences. Spiritual leaders Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi organised peaceful protest marches to raise awareness and support, to keep their land. In response, over one thousand militia invaded the village and hundreds of followers were arrested...soldiers and settlers at the ready to claim the land. Almost simultaneously, several hundred Parihaka supporters were transported and imprisoned at wintry Dunedin in the deepest part of the South Island. Held captive in exile from their loved ones, many died from the harsh living conditions of sealed caves and tunnels and enforced hard labour.

Twelve years later, a legal case drew Mahatma Gandhi to Durban. When he booked a first-class train ticket to Transvaal he was duly

ordered off the train for being 'coloured'. The event changed his life and he started his revolutionary philosophy of active disobedience through a practise called Satyagraha meaning 'truth and firmness'. His teachings prepared the minds of individuals and communities to be disciplined and commit to awakening their consciousness through courage, patience and non-violent action. Gandhi's political career was launched with Satyagraha, and he devoted his life to promoting public action in support of human and legal rights... without fear of imprisonment or death. When he left Durban in 1914, he took leave of 21 years of practice as an advocate for personal and political freedom and spiritual rigour.

The above events in our human history are repeated the world over, on a daily basis. Such actions illustrate the infinite power of individuals and communities who gently lean into the harshness of unconsciousness with perseverance and awareness, for to do so allows the severity to dissolve.

Ngahiraka Manson
Indigenous Curator, Maori Art
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki
Auckland, New Zealand, April 2007

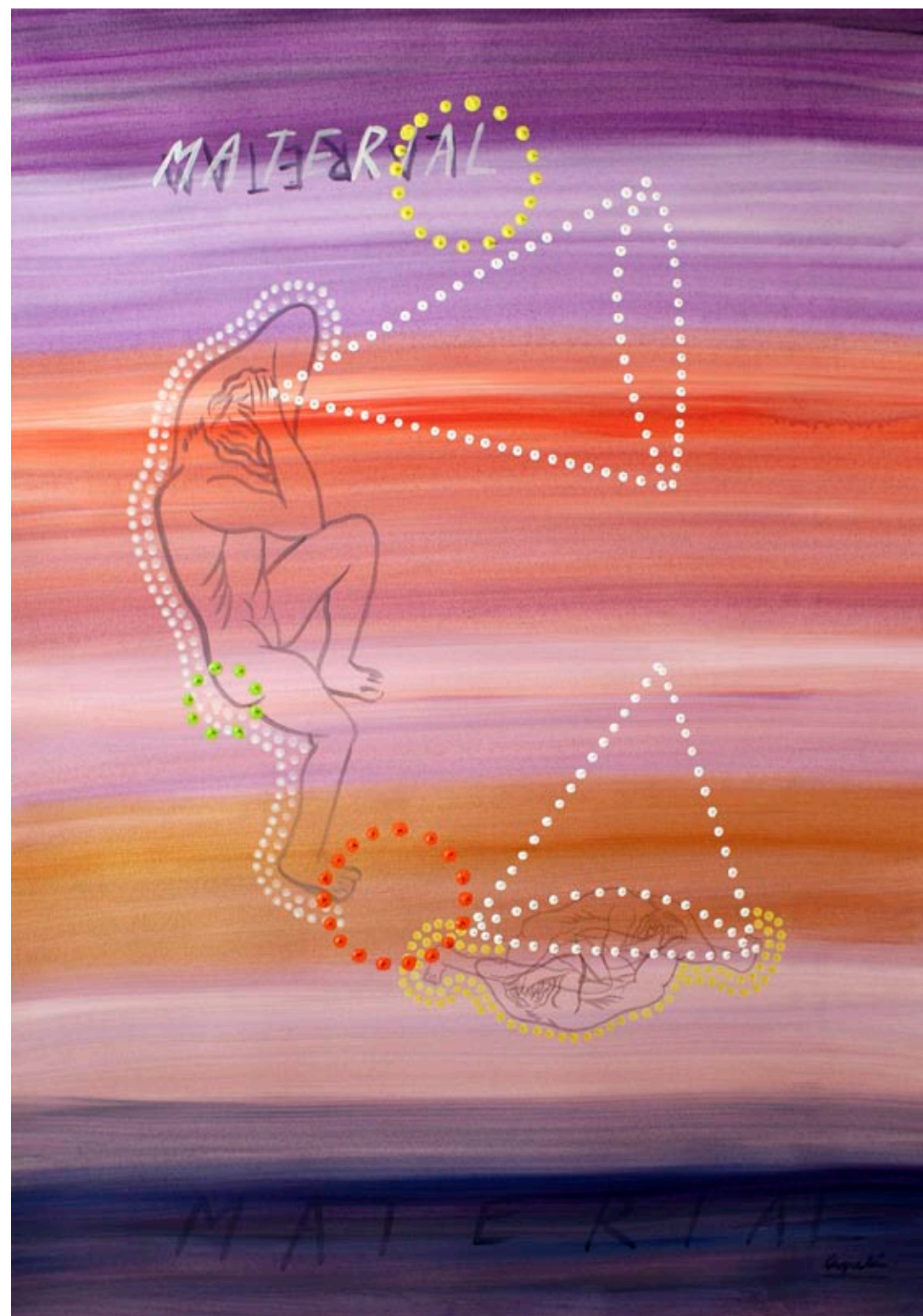




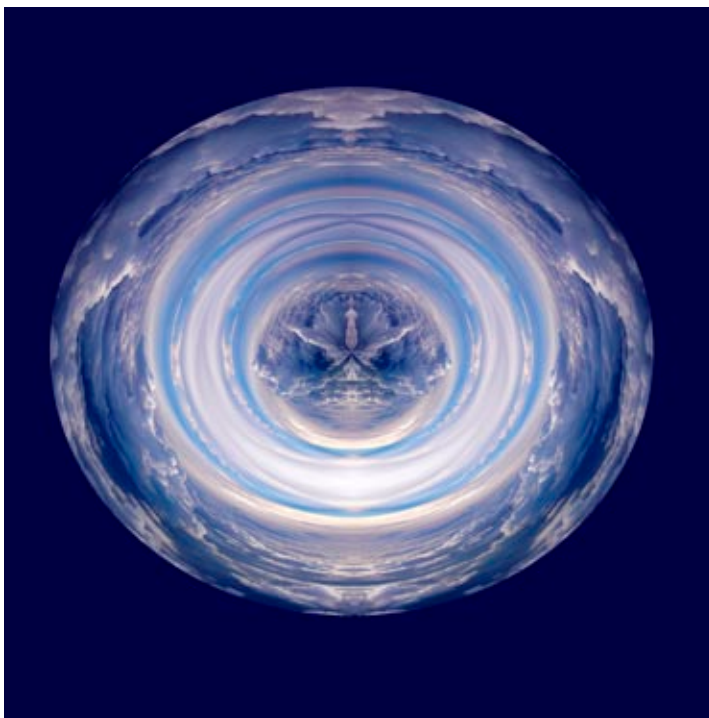
Painting, 2007
Acrylic and fake grass on
canvas, 146 x 210 cm.

Painting, 2008
Acrylic on paper, 107 x 78 cm
Private collecton, Chile

Painting, 2008
Acrylic on paper, 107 x 78 cm
Private collecton, Chile

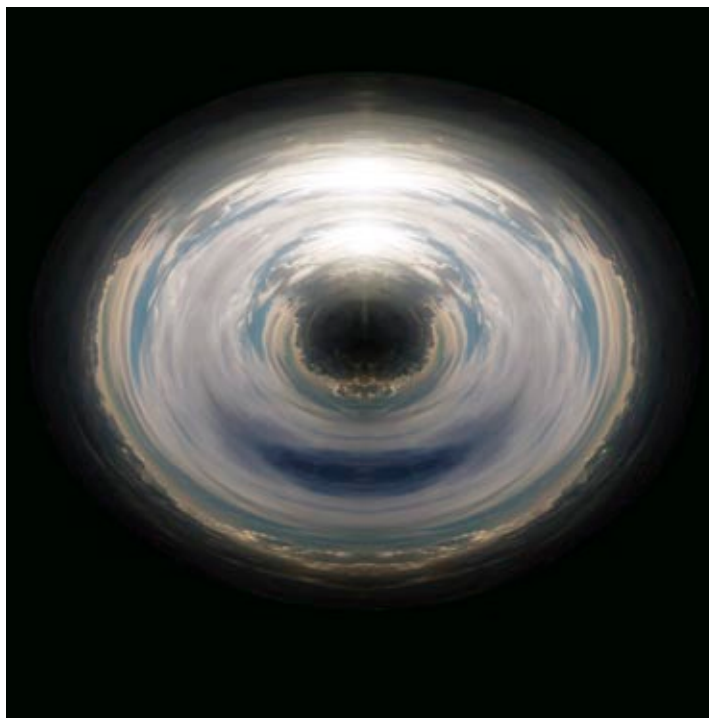






Home I, 2007

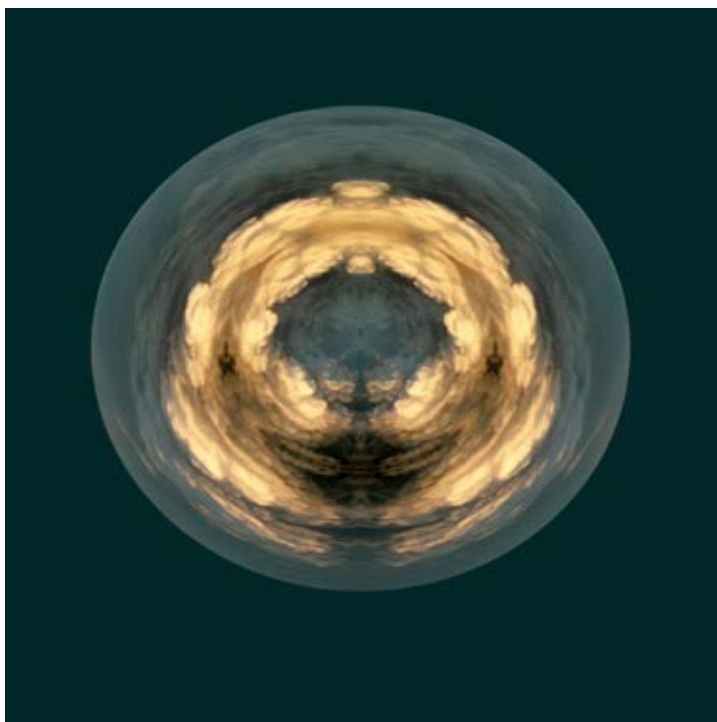
Series of 10 digital images printed on watercolour paper, 100 x 100 cm
 Printed by Lasse Saldert, Helsingborg, Sweden
 One exemplar of each Lennart Green Art Collection



Home IV, II, V, and VI, 2007

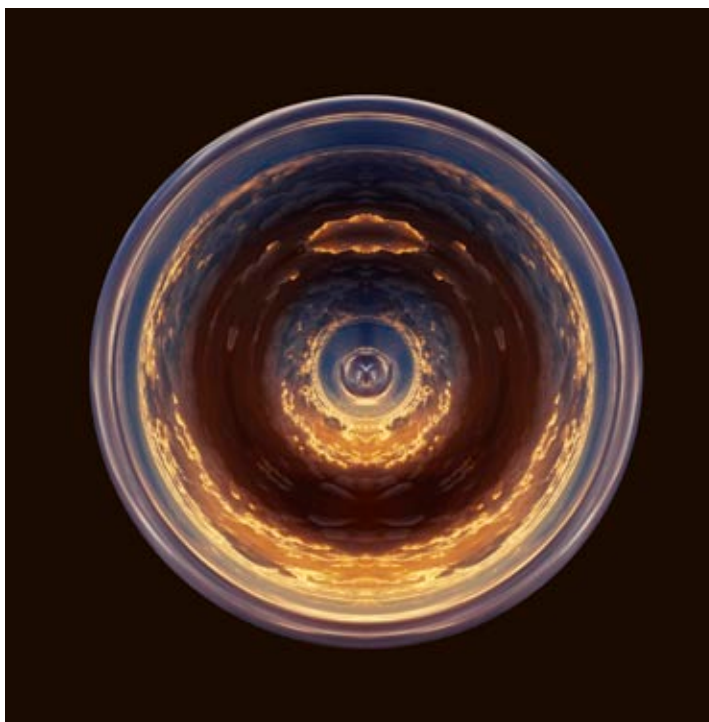
Series of 10 digital images printed on watercolour paper, 100 x 100 cm
 Printed by Lasse Saldert, Helsingborg, Sweden





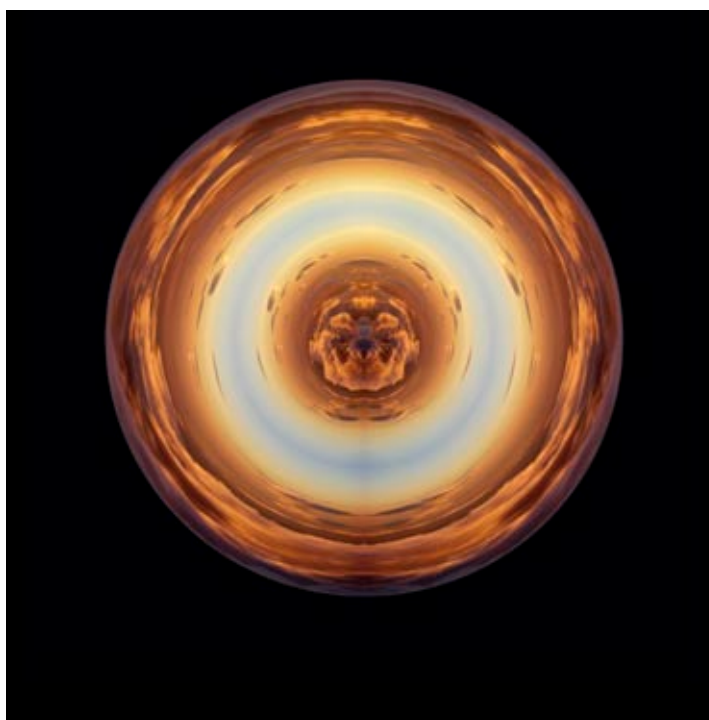
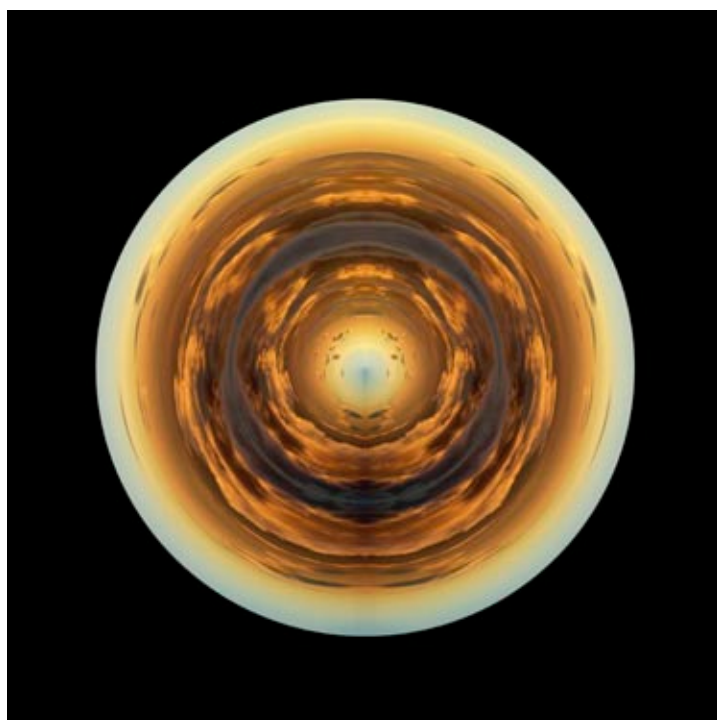
Home II, 2007

Series of 10 digital images printed on watercolour paper, 100 x 100 cm
Printed by Lasse Saldert, Helsingborg, Sweden



Home VII, VIII, IX and X, 2007

Series of 10 digital images printed on watercolour paper, 100 x 100 cm
Printed by Lasse Saldert, Helsingborg, Sweden





Painting, 2007
 Acrylic on canvas, 220 x 300 cm
 Private Collection



Casual Thinking, 2008

Acrylic on canvas, 220 x 180 cm
Cecilia and Bengt Hörberg, Skanör, Sweden

Come again, 2008

Acrylic on canvas, 180 x 220 cm
Ulf Frölander, Stockholm, Sweden



Logo, 2008

Acrylic on canvas, 220 x 180 cm

Cristina and Claes Simonson, Malta





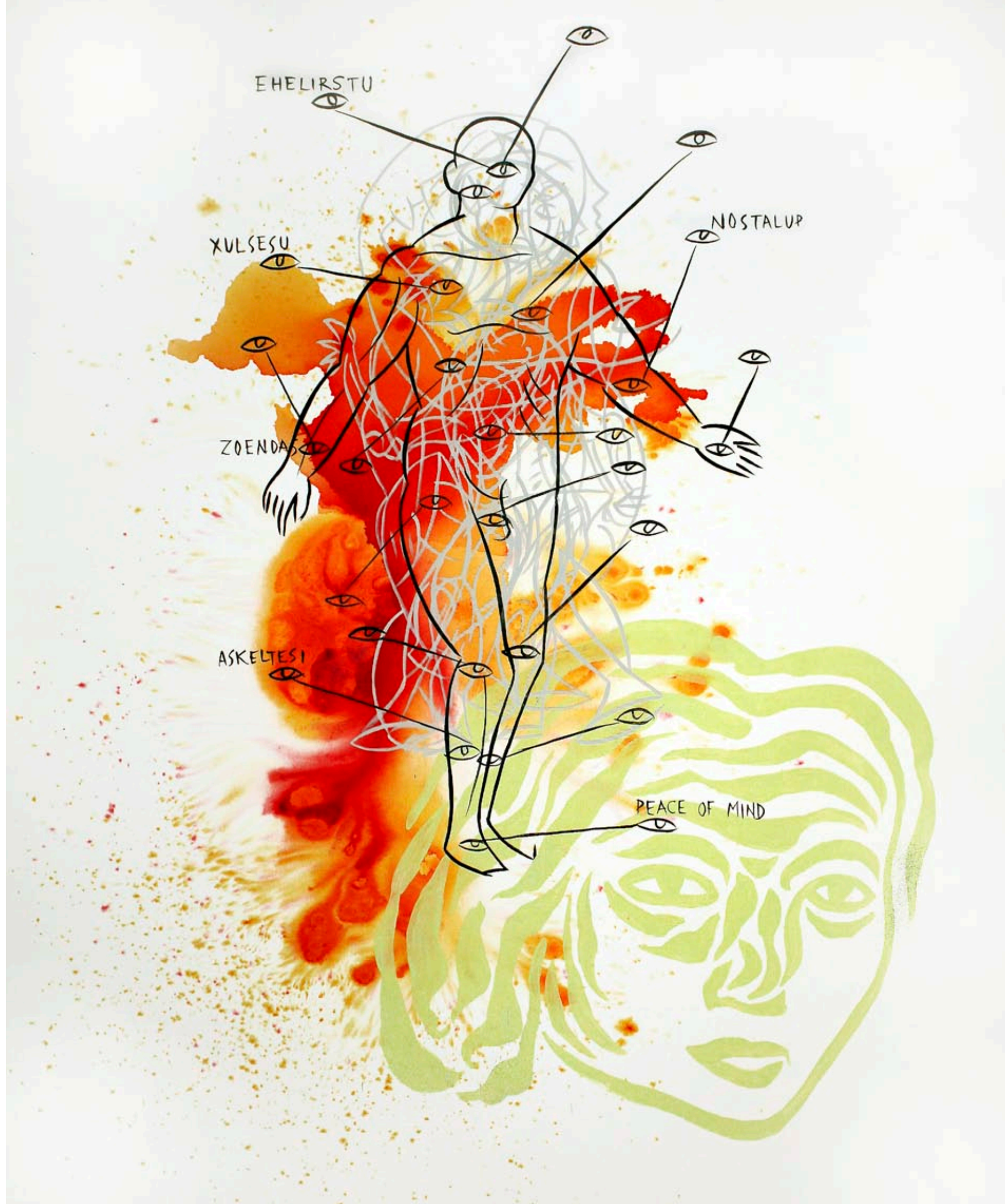
Material, 2008

Acrylic on canvas, 220 x 180 cm
Per Zaunders, Malta



Walks, 2008
Acrylic on canvas, 180 x 220 cm
Per Zaunders, Malta

Nostalup, 2008
Acrylic on canvas, 220 x 180 cm
Hemingsson Art Collection, Danderyd, Sweden





Sounds I, 2008

Acrylic on canvas, 180 x 220 cm

Lennart Green Art Collection, Hässleholm, Sweden

Sounds II, 2008

Acrylic on canvas, 220 x 180 cm

Hemmingsson Art Collection, Danderyd, Sweden



Sounds III, 2008
Acrylic on canvas, 220 x 180 cm
Håkan Mårtensson, Simrishamn, Sweden





Landscape, 2008

Acrylic on canvas, 220 x 180 cm
Cecilia and Bengt Hörberg, Skanör, Sweden



Not Many Words, 2008
Acrylic on canvas, 180 x 220 cm
Håkan Mårtensson, Simrishamn, Sweden

One hundred and fifty four, 2008
Acrylic on canvas, 220 x 180 cm
Lennart Green Art Collection, Hässleholm, Sweden





**The Poet P Leaves L and Heads
Towards the Mountains of K, 2008**
Acrylic on canvas, 206 x 202 cm
Jacob Edgren, Lund, Sweden







Carlos Capelán: Fragments of a Friendship Between Cities

by Nikos Papastergiadis

He is like a medieval city in the twenty-first century. No matter the hot or cold breath of weather the walls are still standing. With inscrutable alleyways and well-worn stones he hides, resists and absorbs. And then with a curious transposition of the familiar and the foreign he claims a luminous presence. Together we have wandered through many cities and alone I have revisited the subjects we discussed and examined. His ironic gaze still penetrating in the darkness of my memory. He has come into my life and is always welcome. I now write as if the city is there, before me, like a thumb print.

Shortly after 9/11, at a time when politicians around the world were qualifying their commitments to historical conventions on human rights, Jimmie Durham claimed that this was an opportune moment to re-define the function

of art. Drawing on Sarat Maharaj's comment that artists produce knowledge he proposed an even more fundamental task:

This is a time when we ask: "Who are we humans?" It's not the American invasive kind of globalization, but globalization where humans try to talk to each other. I think that humanity is trying to talk to itself now, for the first time in human history, maybe. We don't necessary like each other, or like what we are trying to say to each other, but to me it looks like we trying to see ourselves.

Durham is suggesting that art is part of an historic dialogue between different people and this could lead towards a more honest self-evaluation. Obviously such a conversation would require more than the congregation of people in a forum where they articulate their differences and negotiate over fixed boundaries. As it has been often noted, it requires an ethics of hospitality towards the other and an attitude of meekness towards the risks and benefits that may accrue in the exchange. In this process Durham notes that art has the capacity to explore human bonds that are not reliant on an economic system of credit and debit or confined to nationalist categories of loyalty. A decade earlier the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben posited a communal structure in which "humans co-belong without a representable condition of belonging". Cosmopolitanism begins in such propositions. It also exists in numerous events in which it is barely mentioned. Jimmie, Sarat and Carlos, all from the South but also in Malmo-Lund.

Ottawa

In the middle of the summer in one of the most northern capital cities with a bad case of insomniac jet lag ambo I met Carlos Capelán. Finger-nail clippings arranged like little clouds in a vitrine. Floating chairs and suspended bag of water. An elevated platform with ellipses extracted from the surface. A room full of the traces of leaving and the offering of hospitality. Such things are never said in the open. They do not arrive with banners, cards and require check

points. They are already in the whispers that surround the rumours. They remain in the steps long after the journey is completed.

It never got dark in Ottawa. I kept bumping into him and sitting next to him. I didn't know at the time that a friend of his from Panama had sent him a small green book that I had written in Manchester called 'The Complicities of Culture'. At the airport he taught me how to buy presents for children. A great gift. I told him a story about painter who allowed the subject to see himself in art that imitates life. It kind of flattered the haughty lazy Greeks with foresight

He returned to Costa Rica and told his wife about this strange guy that he kept meeting. She said: "it sounds like you made a friend".

Sydney

The story from the airport arrived as a book about the self and the other.

He walked into Artspace with Mosquera after they had attempted to shake off the creases of their journey by walking around the Botanical gardens. "The orchids are wonderful, the birds are healthy, and none of the children and throwing stones!"

Angelsea

We are driving along a dirt track looking for kangaroos. "My kids will never forgive me if I don't return with an image." The track is unpromising. In order to turn the car around I pull into a driveway that leads to someone's house. Carlos sees a light on in the house and imagines a Swedish couple sitting by the window not daring to express the wish for companionship. He mimics the man, "Quick put the coffee on, we have visitors."

Melbourne

In the night that information was gathered for the 1998 Australian census a male: born in Uruguay: occupation artist, was entered into the records as staying in St Kilda.

Madrid

I'll meet you at ARCO.

The taxi drops me at the entrance of what seems to me another airport. Where to begin? Which entrance? At the coat check I hear, "hey Nikos!"

At the Prado we walk past acres of canvas by Velasquez. A prince on a horse. A princess with a fan. A duke with moustache. A Queen on a throne. Etc. etc. etc. Then Las Meninas. The mystery of the order in which everyone looks at you, sovereign, dwarf and child. And yet the eyes of the painter and those that appear in reflection are the ones we see as coming from a void.

We cross the road and buy some toys and trinkets. Later you take me to the private of a Baron. For the first time I see a Mondrian and I am shocked that his lines were hand painted, sometimes not very straight and other times he

even used electrical tape that eventually lifted and curled. You move your index finger across the surface of Turner's stormy skies and the Lucien Freud's flesh. It like a rehearsal of a primal act from the cave of imagination and revelation. Tracing the shadowlines between of life and art.

LAX

The south begins at the departure gate of TACA Airways. No it starts when the hostess announces: 'TACA Airways would like to invite...' STAMPEDE! As I get to my feet a four foot tall cowboy rams two of his seven pieces of hand luggage up my backside. He didn't notice, why should I, nothing personal.

Guatamala City

Sunrise and customs checks, bright and barely noticeable. The passport does not seem so sacred anymore. I spy Carlos waiting on a balcony above the concourse, he is the one smoking. His first words: 'This is the real thing.' The space for sentiment and silence is different here. In Australia the colonizer acted as if the bloody violence of colonialism never happened, here it is a sign of glory and sacrifice that is celebrated in the stained glass stairwell of the Presidential Palace. Even outside a gallery the blood from the nocturnal murder is still there the day after. The bronze sculpture of the poet Asturias is high on its plinth. He is not poised in heavy contemplation but with arms flung backwards, his coat open like wings that will lift him into a future with head full of bursting energy. It is a Hermes of a man. His folder is behind him. Rossina tells us that the sculpted bronze pages that were placed as if falling in his trail were stolen during the previous week. By his young admirers I am sure.

Antigua

One of the earliest colonial cities in Meso-America. Built in 1592 with a cathedral and the administrative buildings lining the central square and neat blocks running on strict North- South, East – West axes. Geometric order the gift of colonialism. All the homes are surrounded by high walls. The rooms run off the cloisters and in the centre a garden dominated by a Jacaranda tree. Carlos and Pablo talk about

the pleasures and anxieties of the periphery – the perennial problem of visibility. I realize that all the complaining that I here in Melbourne, ‘we are provincial’, ‘we are not at the cutting edge’, ‘we are excluded from the global’, is of course an index of where it belongs in the hierarchies, but also a pathetic way of blaming the city for not being ‘cultural enough’, when the real problem is that we are not cultural enough to assume a place in the world. Forget the competitive avant garde fantasy of being ahead, and just get on with doing, as Jimmie said, what is necessary where you are!

San Jose City

Eerie is the word that keeps coming back like the reflux breath at the lip of a volcano. Carlos’s work is at one level, an act of leaving. He usually leaves a mark of his presence in the space his work is exhibited. This also traces the moment of arrival. Between these moments in time the space yawns and folds. His work questions the distance between visual and textual signs and the things, places, feelings, experiences and memories that they seek to represent. These signs and events will never meet. We live in a permanent semantic limbo. But here the gaps are even more palpable.

Who is missing?

In which dream did the city begin?
So many words and buildings arranging the space
Here is your self, your furniture, your mirror
There are the plates with which neighbours exchange
glances
Slide and collide
Spaces in between squeezed like a trigger

Who pressed the switch?

That summoned the father you love, the father you kill
The father that was never there and the father that is still
to arrive
In the city that awaits you
With its art whispering
Graffiti remembering
And the body that leaves her bloody footprints

The journey cracks the mirror
With all its incessant maybe maybe maybe
Its not just me who hangs on to the promise
That boats return

Waiting in foreign ports is as good a place as any
For answers that to the question
In which city do you stay?

Hotel Conference

In the past decade a paradigm shift has enabled a new discourse on migration and migrants. As Nestor Garcia Canclini has argued the state-centric views on belonging have been challenged by new transnational perspectives on the formation of social spaces and a redefinition of the universal definitions of human rights. The teleological claims on social evolution that privileged, what Harald Kleinschmidt called ‘residentialism’ have been discredited,¹ and there is now both a finer appreciation of the complex feedback systems that arise from cross-border movements, and an affirmative valuation of the role of cross-cultural interaction in re-vitalizing and ensuring the viability of social structures. From this perspective migration is now seen as a dynamic and often ongoing feature of social life. Similarly, migrants are no longer typecast as either passive victims that are ‘pushed and pulled’ by external forces, or deviants that threaten social order. It is therefore more appropriate to consider the way migrants plot their journeys and utilise extensive networks of information as part of the normal and conscientious efforts by which people dignify their lives. In Hardt and Negri’s spirited defence of a new form of critical agency migrants are pioneers of what they call the ‘multitude’ and, as Kleinschmidt argues, the new discourse on migration has the potential to extend the notion of citizenship to ‘universalistic principles of human rights irrespective of loyalty to a particular institution of statehood’.

¹ See Harald Kleinschmidt, ‘Migration, Regional Integration and Human Security: An Overview of Research Developments’ in Harald Kleinschmidt (ed.), *Migration, Regional Integration and Human Security*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2006, pp. 61-102

The limitations of the nationalist paradigm have become increasingly self evident in contemporary visual studies and art history. With the hyper-visibility of non-western artists, critics, curators, the adoption of nomadic project based art practices, the accelerated frequency of foreign travel, the wider availability of information through digital technology and the incorporation of the art market in global capital networks the boundaries of art no longer fit within national categories. As Kobena Mercer rightly observed the signs of cultural difference which was a matter of urgency and contention in previous decades has now become a banality. He goes so far as to say that there is now a 'widespread acknowledgement of multiple identities in public life' and the normative incorporation of multiculturalism has both 'enriched our experiences of art and enlivened the entire setting'. Between the recognition of the visibility of the other and a redefinition of the status, a redistribution of the historical significance, and reconfiguration of the terms of negotiation that would otherwise continue to make other cultures invisible, there is, as Mercer also argues, a lot of work to be done. Let us say that the task of bringing the art historical house into an order that is capable of addressing the range of sites, complexity of modes, and diversity of agents that are engaged in artistic production is not just a process of updating the existing anthologies, but more like a more radical project in which concepts, categories and narrative structures require revisiting.

In a Berlin Hotel, Bergen's Art Academy and along the foreshore of the Baltic we discussed the necessity and the limitations to an institutional critique of the genealogies in art history. If cosmopolitanism is an open outlook towards the world and a practice of relating together ideas and materials that originate from foreign places, then why has art history failed to make this the central concept for articulating the constitutive features of the artistic imaginary. Cultural difference has become a normal feature of everyday life in all major cities and surely it is time to also address the unconscious factors that shape a cosmopolitan 'disposition', what Mica Nava calls the 'feelings for attraction and identification with otherness' that produce an intimate and 'visceral cosmopolitanism.' Cosmopolitanism is not

just about private consciousness, but also a social activity of mutual respect and a shared commitment in developing inclusive and hybrid rituals.

Portuguese Berlin

Jimmie seemed to be close to the owner of the restaurant. He and Maria-Theresa spent many of their evenings there and the wine was a wonderful gentle river that kept rippling with pleasure. My daughter Maya was not even one, and your daughter Noeme who was barely four had already claimed her in her silent indomitable gaze. Jimmie seemed very happy that the kids were there, he posed like a grandfather, and told of us of the irony of working in a colossal studio that was once occupied by Hitler's favourite artist. "Energy that waits and needs no explanation that leaves only the trail of its passage, having moved on it has already reached for its desire, not posterity or even clarity, just the power of consumption and a freedom never awakened by question." I wrote this after seeing Jimmie's sculpture in the Venice Biennale. Two years later Maya saw a picture in an email by Maria-Theresa and announced her coming of age: 'I am free'. And yes Carlos, it is true, 'the void expresses itself through form' and it is in the manner of the combination that a tension becomes power.

Kings Way

Driving to work this morning I played the same song seven times. Those bloody Greek songs are made for Autumnal dawns in the South, with their pagan whispers of rose-petals and that tremulous first kiss. In the chorus she summons: 'Young-young like the gods, whoever loves should be spared in battle'.

There is something wild about Greeks. Always hungry, crying at their open wounds and laughing at the sky. You cannot forget how much they are in their landscape. And yet Seferis would say: 'The truth is one seeks not to get away from a place, not to travel, not to see again the people one loves, not even to create something. At bottom, one is seeking to get out of oneself, and perhaps the criterion of a man's worth is the way he manages to get out of himself.'

The cover of the first issue of the journal *Acephale*, drawn by Andre Masson, showed a naked, headless human figure. Bataille: 'Man has escaped from his head, as the condemned man from prison'.

Auckland

My mother watched you paint a mural that would remain only as long as the exhibition. 'And then', she asked, 'what will happen to it?' It will not disappear but neither will it remain. It will not be repeated anywhere else but it will be reiterated in another time and place. It comes again and again. Because across the South there are the common inter-linking histories of indigeneity, colonialism and modernization. The struggles for justice are not the same everywhere, but it is part of the problem that we know so little of each other's examples. What parallels exist between these places? These are questions that Carlos ponders in a new series that he takes from New Zealand as a contribution to another project in South Africa.

Memento Mori

Death has no city. It just surrounds everything. In Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors* it stretches across the foreground of the subject's feet. Hell was then below us, now our spatial imagination is more multi-dimensional. It ap-

peared as a skull, it is in the vortex of signs from different languages, either way it is place that remains unknowable. It cannot be compared with anything that we know or imagine. Death is the only outside. Severo Sarduy - 'If anamorphis – the point at which perspective plunges into the illegible ... was used in the old baroque to codify a surplus that was often moral – allegory or vanitas – it reappears in South American baroque without the trope of double meaning, reduced to a pure critical artifice and presented, beyond any didactic ambition as a 'natural' technique: neither a deceptive shell nor an encoded landscape.'

Maroubra

Paper bark trees, ochre lined cliffs – the material with which art begins. On the other hand, we pause for lunch at the edge of the Pacific Ocean. 'Look!' I point. 'On the other side of this horizon is the beginning of your home.' A longer drag of the cigarette. Is there where the dream of art begins.

An artist from Chile comes to Australia. He and Carlos have worked together for a long time. The diaspora never forgets. Supplies come in both directions. He greets me with a bear hug. Every time our eyes cross he sings like Frankie, 'Only you'. All night he keeps this refrain with a smile and a feint tear in his eyes. Who else is he seeing? I think of Carlos's fotos of the Andes taken from a plane window. I try to imagine an island called Chiloe where Carlos lived and the missing people.

Onlyme
Onlyyou

Who do you see?

When you bow to the Mountain's crown
And its peasant wrinkles of glacial frowns

When you place your hand beneath the sleepy hollow
Of a damp dog afternoon

When you measure the blue pulse
In her marble veins

Onlyme
Onlyyou

There is nothing worse than a statue's curse
Nor more blessed than the jacaranda's smile

As you lifted the stone with your muscule and mind
My thigh twinged
Rush
Neither youth nor discovery
Just the nod from the other side of the pacific

Persian Promises

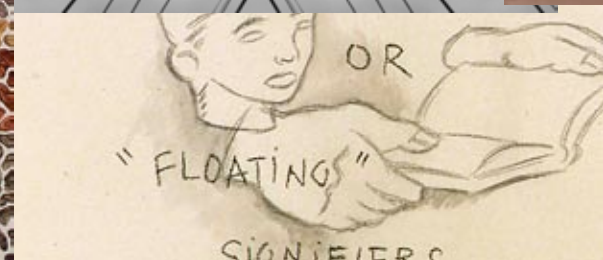
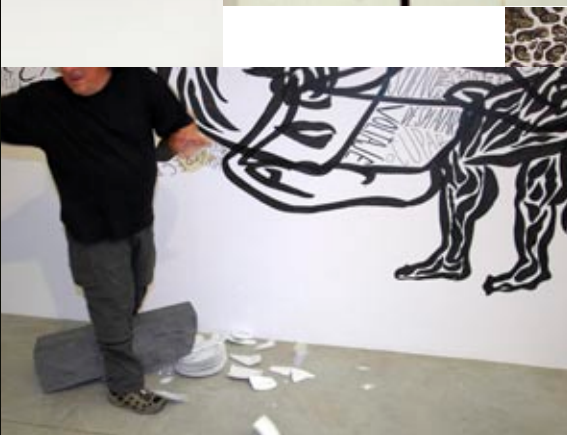
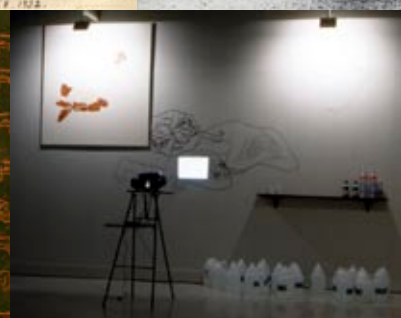
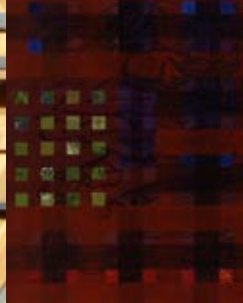
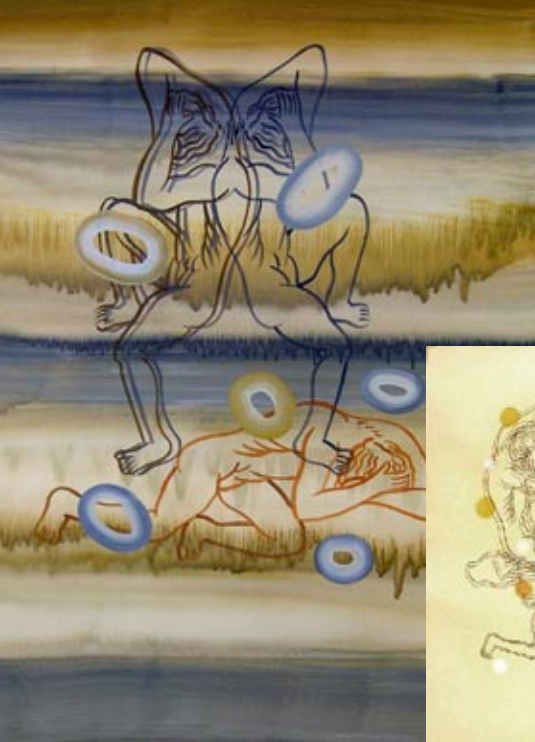
Once upon a time there was a Persian King, who summoned to his palace the two finest artists in the world, a Chinaman from the East and a Greek from the West. The two artists were taken into the courtyard and allocated an exact half portion. The courtyard was divided by a heavy curtain. No conversation between the artists was permitted and they were forbidden from entering each other's space. He then turned to the two artists to check that these rules were acceptable. The Chinaman immediately confirmed his acceptance and proceeded to unpack his tools. The Greek gazed in the direction of the sun added: 'If it is acceptable to the Chinaman, then it is also acceptable to me.'

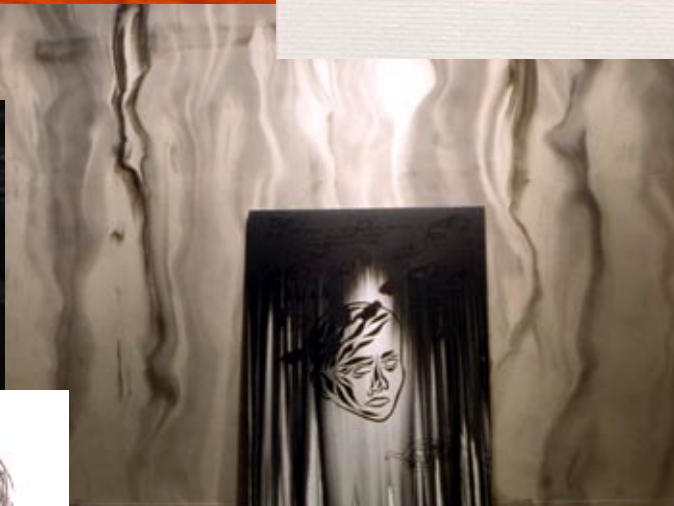
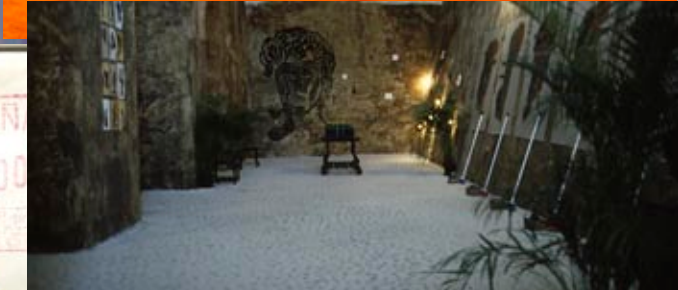
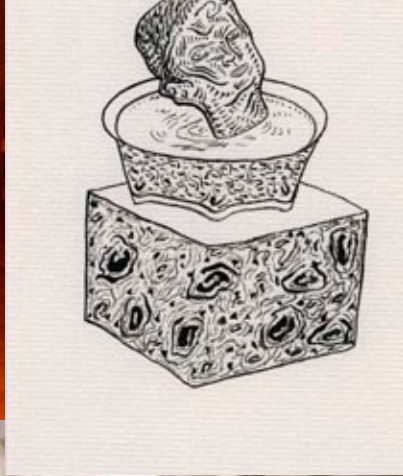
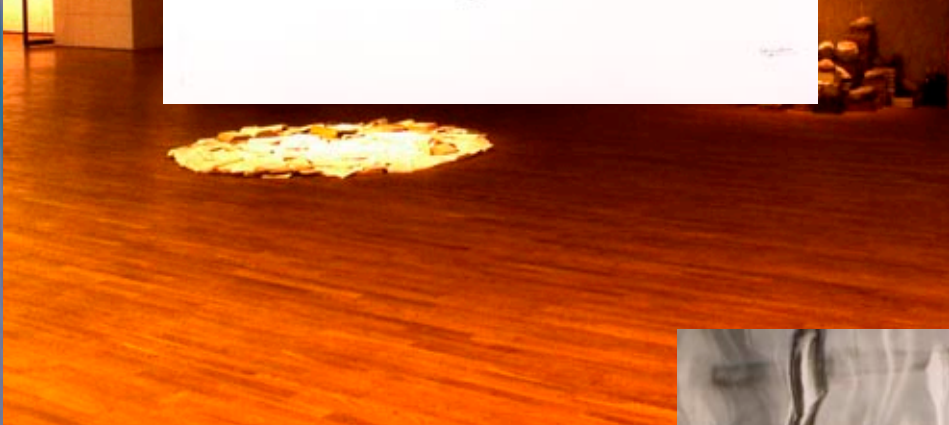
At the end of the month the King summoned both artists and asked if they had completed their tasks. The Chinaman, who was exhausted but also slightly intoxicated by his own sense of accomplishment, declared that his work was complete. The Greek, well tanned and with a distinct smell of wine in his breath, smiled back to the King and declared that if the Chinaman's work was complete, then so too was his. As they entered the first part of the courtyard a collective sigh of enchantment was released. They had stepped into a walled paradise. The most exotic flowers, serene ponds and lush fields decorated the walls. The courtiers began to snicker to themselves. 'Surely, this is the winner.'

The King was equally entranced and impressed. But he also noticed that the Greek was also thrilled by the Chinaman's work, and that his confidence was not dampened but lifted by the pleasure that was being expressed. The King had also noticed how the Greek's spirit was rising in proportion with his own approval. The King ordered the curtain to be dropped. Again the King was transported into a celestial garden. Here the horizon had blurred. Everything was in perfect harmony. Everything that the Chinaman had painted was perfectly reflected on the wall. The same flowers. The same still waters. The same depths of green and shade. However, whenever the King took a step to his left or right there was a responding movement in the image. As the King stepped closer his image magnified.

The Greek had built a mirror.

History does not record the victor of the competition. However, archaeologists have recently confirmed that the two works survived side by side for many centuries.





La proclama ilegible

Acerca de la obra de Capelán

by Ticio Escobar

Introducción. Las dos escenas

En general, los acercamientos a la obra de Capelán suelen ser encarados desde la figura del exilio. Este abordaje constituye una operación legítima; es indudable que el desarraigo del artista -que abandonara el Uruguay esquivando la represión dictatorial- marca con fuerza el itinerario entero de su trabajo. Este texto también toma como eje esa figura, pero no lo hace trabajando la posición específica de los refugiados políticos (aunque la suponga), sino el exilio del lenguaje: los desplazamientos radicales que exige la falla de la representación. Quizá los tantos desalojos y traslados que ha sufrido Capelán han aguzado su experiencia acerca del distanciamiento de la mirada. Y le han facilitado, así, el acceso a los juegos que emprende el arte intentado reparar, desde el desarraigo, la ruina del lugar: esos juegos extraños capaces de entreabrir espacios paralelos, donde el lenguaje resuena ya sólo como imagen o como escritura (trazada en el límite, suspendida sobre el silencio). Espacios espectrales desde donde vislumbrar el rumbo arisco del sentido. Desde esta perspectiva, me aproximo a la obra de Capelán en cuanto ubicada ante el contemporáneo fracaso de la

representación; quebranto que fuerza a giros violentos y emplazamientos extremos del lenguaje: ante las insuficiencias del orden simbólico no queda más que asumir movilizaciones radicales y lances desesperados. Aquel fracaso puede ser ubicado en dos escenarios. El primero se refiere a la representación política de las identidades; el segundo a la representación que moviliza la obra de arte. A los efectos de su mejor exposición, este texto considera ambas escenas por separado, pero ellas se encuentran esencialmente imbricadas en tanto involucran la política de la mirada.

Por un lado, las mudanzas de posición, los cruces litigiosos de miradas, tienen consecuencias en el reconocimiento oscilante de las subjetividades (:desde dónde una identidad es enunciada?). Por otro, el desencuentro entre las cosas y sus apariencias (fallo de la representación en el arte) no sólo turce el lenguaje, sino que sobresalta el trabajo de la mirada. “Una obra resiste”, dice Didi-Huberman, “si sabe dislocar la visión” y, propone, en consecuencia, considerar, junto a la forma, esa “noción fluctuante”: la mirada¹. Si, carente de un

¹ Georges Didi-Huberman, “La emoción no dice yo. Diez fragmentos sobre la libertad estética”, en Adriana Valdés, edit., *Alfredo Jaar. La política de las Imágenes*, Metales Pesados, Santiago de Chile, 2008, pág.41.

² Judith Butler, *Vida precaria. El poder del duelo y la violencia*, Paidós, Buenos Aires, 2006, pág.180.

previo aval metafísico, la obra de arte se encuentra sujeta a las contingencias de su puesta en exhibición, termina dependiendo de sus posiciones (de sus desplazamientos) ante la mirada. Su investidura aurática obedece a una “mínima distancia” (Benjamin): una distancia fortuita siempre, marcada por la posición provisional del objeto y librada a los antojos del deseo (el responsable de la fluctuación de la mirada).

Pero las escenas donde falla de la representación también se vinculan no sólo porque ambas comparten un estatuto político, sino porque involucran una dimensión estética. “Para que la representación comunique lo humano”, escribe Butler, “no sólo se precisa que la representación fracase, sino también que muestre su fracaso”². Contra la inmovilización o la melancolía que produce el desengaño del símbolo, sólo cabe la representación de la representación: una dolorosa torsión del lenguaje mediante la cual él ofrece su carencia a la mirada buscando, así, vestir con imágenes la falta. Esta complicada operación es oficio peculiar del arte.

I. La escena de la identidad

Luego de un tiempo largo de exclusión, a partir de las últimas décadas del siglo pasado la figura de la identidad volvió a ocupar un puesto en la agenda de los debates de la crítica cultural. Pero su concepto había cambiado de manera fundamental. El llamado “giro identitario” comenzó a plantearlo no como el nombre de una sustancia, sino como el de una construcción histórica contingente. Así, el término se encuentra más cerca de designar un proceso histórico (y por ende, variable) de identificación que una identidad fija, predeterminada por notas esenciales. En mayor o menor medida, las identidades corresponden a procesos variables de formación de subjetividades y a posiciones estratégicas. No se agotan, por eso, en configuraciones y excluyentes: los individuos y los actores sociales pueden asumir formatos identitarios múltiples y descartables según los diversos recortes que hagan ellos de sus posiciones de enunciación. Es decir, según cómo se presenten, se autorrepresenten. En este punto aparecen de nuevo las figuras de la representación y la mirada, porque sólo a medias los sujetos se “autorrepresentan”. Por un lado, ha colapsado el Sujeto cartesiano (dueño de su propio enunciado). Por otro, han decaído los sistemas tradicionales de representación basados en grandes unidades fijas (la Nación, el territorio, la clase, el partido político, etc.) y aparecido nuevas matrices identificatorias, conformadas tanto por la globalización (industrias culturales, comunidades on line) como por nuevos modelos de inscripción subjetiva (basados, por ejemplo, en las afinidades personales, el género, la opción sexual o la diferencia estética, étnica o generacional)³.

Los mecanismos clásicos de representación de lo propio y lo otro aparecen, así, perturbados. Y esto tiene consecuencias para la diferencia del llamado arte latinoamericano. Enunciado desde el centro, el arte producido en las periferias ocupa el lugar prefijado del otro; es decir la contracara de

³ Ante el riesgo de que este regreso a formas de identificación primaria (provistas por la “comunidad orgánica”), promuevan encapsulamientos identitarios y comprometan las estrategias de conjunto que requiere el espacio público (muy especialmente en América Latina), se afirma la necesidad de articular las identidades parciales en proyectos orientados a la consolidación de aquel espacio. El cruce entre las figuras de identidad y de ciudadanía ha abierto en este ámbito salidas políticas considerables.

la identidad ejemplar detentada por el Yo occidental. Este esquema se basa en una disyunción absoluta: el centro y la periferia ocupan los términos extremos de una oposición binaria que hace del otro la inversión subalterna y refleja del uno y no admite terceros lugares. De acuerdo a este diagrama, buscando afirmar su diferencia el arte latinoamericano se encuentra ante el siguiente dilema: o bien plantea sus obras como pura oposición a las producidas por el mainstream (gesto que significa la inversión refleja de éstas y reitera, en negativo, la asimetría), o bien sobrerrepresentan las notas propias de la identidad en clave exotista.

La mejor obra producida desde América Latina intenta esquivar esta falsa alternativa. El trabajo de Capelán se inscribe en esta posición. Asume que, aunque fuere a través de complejos reposiciones transnacionales, sigue operando la oposición entre el centro y la periferia. Pero, también asume que esa oposición debe ser deconstruida, planteada como una tensión contingente, un conflicto abordable según circunstancias históricas variables. Desconectados los términos centro y periferia del enganche de una contradicción trascendental, la diferencia de las prácticas latinoamericana puede ser desmarcadas no través de la inversión del modelo hegemónico, sino mediante posiciones diversas, pragmáticas, marcadas por intereses propios y circunstancias varias. Esta postura crítica deja de lado toda pretensión de autenticidad fundacional y todo intento de erigir los rasgos contingentes de la producción latinoamericana en consagrados arquetipos de la identidad. Y posibilita a Capelán discutir la folklorización de la alteridad y los estereotipos de la memoria mediante estrategias que apelan a los desvaríos de la mirada: mediante “ganchos”, según su expresión, que confunden las significaciones concertadas.

Los lugares del exiliado

“Busco no encasillarme en la figura del exiliado porque estoy enamorado del lenguaje”, afirma el artista⁴. La pérdida del país de nacimiento, la distancia, las vicisitudes del refugio

político, la trashumancia de quien debe peregrinar continuamente y quien debe regresar y volver a salir porque la patria se ha bifurcado, o multiplicado (se ha desplazado una y otra vez), todas estas melancólicas figuras de desarraigo y privación no son encaradas por Capelán de manera temática, sino mediante la coerción ejercida sobre el lenguaje para que pueda nombrar lo que está más allá de sí.

Así, el artista merodea la falta abierta por el exilio, la rodea intentando encontrar los signos que la encarnen; termina por convertir la escritura en imagen, por inventar discursos ladeados que la encaren rápidamente. ¿Cómo ofrecer a la mirada una ausencia? ¿Cómo recuperar un lugar imposible, regresar a un sitio que está en otro lado, recordar un país que, estironeado por muchas memorias, se ha soltado o convertido en muchos países o en lugares diferentes? Sólo asumiendo el rodeo oscuro de la palabra que, llegada al límite, calla y deviene espectro de sí, eco de su voz, sombra de su grafía porfiada.

Retrato enmascarado

La mirada deforma: sólo deformando la imagen puede encontrarse, por un instante, un ángulo adecuado. La anamorfosis de los retratos exigen la mirada ladeada (“al sesgo”, dice Žižec) para poder reconstruir, en el momento de su propia sustracción, el contorno rápido de lo que no tiene contorno exacto. De lo que no tiene un solo contorno: los autorretratos del exiliado se encuentran distorsionados por diferentes miradas. Se encuentran aplastados, convertidos en manchas informes cuya clave se encuentra sustraída a la mirada directa, al intento de reconstruir literalmente la figura extraviada. Pero los retratos también se encuentran conmovidos por la insistencia del símbolo derrotado y, además, por el trabajo reiterativo de la memoria que vacila: algunos autorretratos aparecen sobrepuestos en dibujos sucesivos que entrecruzan sus líneas, multiplican sus perfiles y hacen vacilar las figuras. “Son retratos tartamudos”, dice Capelán. Están trazados con porfía, reiterados una y otra vez como si el anterior

⁴ Entrevista con Carlos Capelán mantenida en Asunción el 15 de abril de 2008. En adelante, todas las citas del artista tienen como base esa entrevista.

dibujo hubiera sido tragado por el muro o debiera ser enmendado. El sujeto del exilio es múltiple y aparece siempre descentrado. Carece de una superficie de inscripción homogénea y nivelada: se desfigura en los ángulos, rebota en las paredes, desconoce las orientaciones del plano; deviene un ovillo de líneas enmarañadas. El trabajo de inscripción de la memoria (el intento de representar la mismidad desplazada) exige la reiteración obsesiva de una silueta que no puede ser cerrada. Emplaza (en el doble sentido de convocar y posicionar) la presentación del rostro en cualquier lado: en rincones, por detrás de otras obras, en espacios repletos o mal iluminados. Tal como ocurre en el caso de las pinturas rupestres (que el artista recuerda pintando él mismo sobre rocas en algún caso) lo importante es el hecho de que la imagen comparezca, aunque sea confundida con otras imágenes previas y aunque no alcanzare la luz a revelarla. La performatividad mágica: la pura fuerza de la forma invocada. La pintura del rostro sobre el propio rostro también adquiere un sentido performativo: como la máscara (a la cual Lévi-Strauss equipara) corrige la propia cara desde una autopercepción exiliada.

La apariencia de lo invisible

“Donde pones penumbra obligas a mirar”, comenta Capelán. El recuerdo obliga a entrecerrar los ojos, aguzar la mirada, reponer imaginariamente lo borrado por la distancia o las sombras: lo que no puede ser plenamente divisado. En algunas obras, como las presentadas en la Bienal de Venecia de 1995, Capelán produce oscuridad para forzar a mirar la nada: el no-lugar donde se encuentran los objetos perdidos y los sitios cambiados, el vacío que abre el territorio al desplazarse. (La zona umbría donde aguarda lo que no puede ser mostrado pero exige serlo, imperativamente).

Casa tomada

Las ocupaciones de casas abandonadas, realizadas tempranamente por el artista entre 1985 y 1987, pueden ciertamente ser vistas como reflexiones críticas, irónicas, acerca de

la institucionalidad del arte. Pero pueden ser consideradas, además, como intentos de compensación imaginaria del mítico lugar perdido. O un ritual de duelo por la inutilidad del regreso, el escamoteo del origen.

Ese rito también es rastreable en el montaje de caóticas habitaciones domésticas, minuciosa, compulsivamente instaladas en sucesivas ocasiones. Freud distingue entre la simple rememoración (*Erinnerung*), que pretende identificar y restaurar, intacta, la escena primigenia y la “perlaboración” (*Durcharbeitung*) que desarregla la secuencia del tiempo y deja abierta en el pasado la pregunta por el sentido (el suspenso del acontecer). Lyotard entiende este término como una operación que no busca restituir la escena original, sino presuponer “que el pasado mismo...da los elementos con los cuales se construirá la escena”⁵. Esta es el espacio que busca instalar Capelán: no la escenografía que repone fielmente el lugar primero, sino la escena donde se representa la imposibilidad de la representación. Es decir, la que la abre al juego de significaciones capaces de trastornar la memoria de la casa original para hacer de ella un resguardo de sentido.

La tierra

En una de las instalaciones sofocantes (llamada, no por casualidad, *La Casa de la Memoria*, 1996), largas vitrinas interrumpen el paso. Llevan expuestas pequeños terrones traídos por amigo suyos desde distintos puntos del mundo (resuena en su interior cerrado el nombre de la tierra en Heidegger, *Welt*, la materia compacta y oscura que se niega a ser descifrada).

Este pequeño rito significa una forma de nombrar el heterogéneo territorio propio/ajeno; o una manera de construir identidad según afinidades grupales (modalidad social más cercana al concepto punk de grupo urbano que a la comunidad hippie, según el artista); pero también, sugiere un modo de diagramar la geografía a partir de afectos y sensibilidades y mediante la geometría de configuraciones estrictamente

⁵ J.F. Lyotard, *Lo inhumano. Charlas sobre el tiempo*, Manantial, Buenos Aires, 1998. págs. 35 y 40.

visuales. Cada montón de tierra se encuentra simbólicamente marcado: proviene del suelo de un sitio privadamente consagrado (se encuentra compuesto por elementos invertidos por el trabajo de la memoria). El artista construye colectivamente el suelo de la escena, a medio camino entre lo público y lo privado. Traza un mapa.

Un mapa

Deleuze y Guattari emplean el término mapa para oponerlo al de calco⁶. Éste pretende copiar fielmente el espacio; aquél, reinscribir las geografías para abrirlas a múltiples coordenadas de sentido. Intenta el uno reconstruir puntualmente los datos del territorio representado; busca el mapa admitir las presiones tornadizas del deseo para reinventar las fronteras e invertir la posición de los rumbos cardinales, imaginar salidas y entradas que no registran los mapamundis, acercamientos y lejanías imposibles y suelos de extrañas tierras mezcladas⁷. Capelán incluye en sus instalaciones mapas de su país, pero a veces también llama “mapas” a las mismas instalaciones, en cuanto promueven cartografías y esquemas topográficos: escrituras cifradas, diagramas de itinerarios azarosos y posiciones boyantes: puntos que sólo existen como don ofrecido a la mirada.

La carta prestada

A veces los amigos no acercan montones de tierra, sino sobres cerrados que, dispuestos sin ser abiertos en marcos o en vitrinas, pasan a ser ofrecidos/sustraídos a la mirada. La distancia que precisa el obrar de la memoria se establece a partir de puntos ciegos. (Por eso, la carta expuesta de manera demasiado cercana no puede ser divisada).

⁶ Gilles Deleuze y Félix Guattari, *Rizoma. Introducción*, Pre-Textos, Valencia, 2005, págs. 28 y sgtes.

⁷ Podría relacionarse respectivamente el calco y el mapa con las citadas figuras de *rememoración* y *perlaboración*.

II. La escena del arte

Ganchos

La segunda escena donde se representa el fracaso de la representación es la del arte. Desde siempre el sistema del arte se construye a partir de las maniobras de la representación, que sustituyen el objeto por su imagen y hacen de este escamoteo principio de nuevas verdades. El concepto clásico de representación, basado en la comparecencia entera del objeto representado, ha fracasado, ya se sabe. Y tal fracaso - la imposibilidad de alcanzar la cosa- marca de negatividad y tiñe de melancolía el ámbito entero del arte.

Así, la crítica de la representación forma parte de la agenda del arte actual. Por lo menos desde Kant, desde los inicios del arte moderno, éste se define precisamente a partir de un litigio trascendental entre sujeto y objeto: una historia complicada de cruces y desencuentros, de promesas y desengaños. El reino de la estética -el de la apariencia sensible, el de la imagen, el de la representación- resulta desde entonces un inevitable teatro de sombras: la antesala confusa que precede al reino del arte. Cuando este reino derrumba sus muros -cuando cancela la autonomía de la forma estética- las cosas se complican aún más. ¿Cómo representar lo que está afuera si no existe ya un adentro diferenciado? En principio, el desalojo de lo estético por las cosas reales o su concepto, correspondería más o menos al cumplimiento del presagio hegeliano. Pero el hecho es que el arte sigue funcionando e, incluso, se han fortalecido sus instituciones, alimentadas en parte por los intereses de los trans-mercados. En un espacio tan resbaloso las cuestiones no se resuelven, pero tampoco terminan de cancelar la escena.

Hay una salida, provisional; una salida de emergencia: es cierto que ha colapsado el concepto metafísico de representación (la mimesis como cumplimiento de la presencia), pero el arte contemporáneo -tanto como su teoría, de la que no se diferencia demasiado- ha sabido hacer de esta falla

argumento de provechos nuevos. La sentencia de Buttler -la referida a que el fracaso de la representación sólo se resuelve en su propia exhibición- puede ser citada de nuevo en este punto. Es que la imposibilidad de encuentro entre el signo y la cosa constituye la fuerza misma del arte contemporáneo, cuya economía se mueve a partir de la no consumación de sus propias ansias.

“El arte deja la presa por la sombra”, dice Lévinas⁸: opta en seguida por la seducción de la apariencia. Pero, insatisfecho con la mera ilusión, quiere en verdad ambas cosas: no renuncia a la presa real, que busca cazar por debajo del velo que la encubre y realza. El arte advierte la trampa de la representación, pero aspira a servirse de sus artificios para alcanzar lo real. Quiere burlar el límite de la escena: nombrar la intemperie, el mundo de afuera, las miserias o epopeyas de la historia, las culturas extrañas, las zozobras personales. Es más: quiere alcanzar no sólo la incierta realidad sino lo real inaccesible⁹. Para hacerlo, debe burlar el círculo de la representación aunque no pueda desmontarlo. Sólo resta el recurso de las imágenes, que, por un instante, pueden sostenerse más allá del límite y relampaguear sobre el fondo oscurísimo de lo innombrable.

Capelán trabaja esta escena imprecisa buscando asumir las artimañas de la ficción para rozar el cuerpo esquivo de lo que se anuncia y se retrae. Una figura suya resume bien este intento: la de gancho. Este dispositivo es similar al señuelo lacaniano de la mirada: la engañifa que asegura la mostración del objeto y sostiene su aura. El artista dice que usa un gancho cuando tiende una celada al espectador para atraer y desafiar su mirada y, luego, para desconcertarlo obligándolo a reenfoques, ladeamientos y cambios de puntos de vista que abran perspectivas nuevas de significación. De este modo, puede escapar, por un instante, del círculo de la representación e imaginar lo que lo excede.

Los ganchos implican jugadas irónicas, uno de los mecanis-

mos fundamentales que dispone el arte para distanciarse de su propia escena y observarla y comentarla como si le fuera ajena. Cierta pintura realizada a mano por Capelán constituye un gancho, porque mientras que exhibe la destreza manual, apunta a sostener conceptos que nada tienen que ver con el oficio pictórico. Amaga por un costado y golpea por otro; obliga al observador a vigilar, desconfiante, lo que ve; a buscar el sentido donde no se muestra. Mantiene en suspenso el lance de la mirada, que sospecha del objeto presentado y supone un detrás suyo, un adentro, un lado invisible que esconde la clave. También actúan como ganchos los encuadres de objetos vulgares exhibidos como obras de arte e, incluso, las presentaciones en formato tradicional de objetos que sólo podrían ser considerados artísticos en clave contemporánea (es decir, que no adquieren su “artisticidad” de propiedades intrínsecas suyas, sino de los mecanismos de su puesta en exhibición). En cierto sentido, podría decirse que la escritura actúa como gancho: expone la letra pero termina activando como imagen.

De lo ilegible

Buscando traspasar los límites del orden simbólico, el umbral de la escena de la representación, Capelán fuerza el lenguaje hasta su extremo, explora sus últimas márgenes, lo apremia para que devenga imagen, escritura, para que se abra hacia lo que tiene de indescifrable. Recordemos a Derrida cuando sostiene que leer supone el reconocimiento de un principio de ilegibilidad. Si el lenguaje no es capaz de transparentar sus significados, éstos deben ser perseguidos en las derivas errantes del signo, en sus extravíos y fallos, en sus silencios y entrelíneas.

Esta búsqueda se encuentra provista de un sentido ético y político: supone desconfiar de la omnipotencia del lenguaje, discutir su dirección única, desafiar el poder de sus códigos concertados. En esta dirección, Capelán apela a astutas artimañas para desestabilizar el significante y suscitar la proliferación del sentido. Estos ganchos buscan revertir el hueco

⁸ Emmanuel Lévinas, *La realidad y su sombra, Libertad y mandato, Trascendencia y altura*, Editorial Trotta, Madrid, 2001, p. 52

⁹ El término “real” es usado en el sentido en que lo emplea Lacan para designar lo que escapa al símbolo, lo que no puede ser representado. .

que abre la representación: el vacío que deja lo omitido. El intento de sortear la imposibilidad de alcanzar lo real exige estrategias diversas que escapan del orden de la forma: “las cuestiones que cuentan”, dice Fabri, “más que sintácticas son tácticas”¹⁰.

Su obra *Los Primitivos*, 1986, que consiste en un libro intervenido, trabaja el conflicto, indecible, entre la imagen y el texto. El volumen es invadido por figuras que entran en tensión con las palabras y las ilustraciones, usurpan sus lugares o negocian con ellas terceros lugares. Así, por ejemplo, en el capítulo *Los primitivos*, los dibujos de Capelán interfieren los contenidos del artículo forzando a que la etnología etnocéntrica europea sea leída desde otros lugares y que la propia fotografía etnográfica sea puesta en cuestión. Esta operación constituye, por otra parte, una postura ante ciertas cuestiones que, relacionadas una vez más con la representación, desvelan al arte contemporáneo. Me refiero, en este caso, al problema del contenidismo. Una vez superada la autonomía formal, el arte se vuelca sobre discursos de epistemologías diferentes: los de la filosofía y el psicoanálisis, la sociología, la antropología. Ahora bien, desprovisto del cerco de la forma estética, ¿cómo puede el arte enfrentar esos campos diferentes sin disolverse en ellos? La cuestión no tiene una respuesta absoluta porque la forma y el contenido entran en litigios contingentes y variables insolubles a priori. El arte se abre a contenidos extra-artísticos pero éstos deben ser, aun mínimamente, acotados por la forma sensible para que puedan comparecer ante la mirada. Esta obra de Capelán se ubica ante este problema: sostiene un discurso extra-artístico (una crítica del colonialismo antropológico) pero lo hace desde los argumentos de la estética: la fuerza del trazo (subrayado en su afiliación a cierta tendencia característica del dibujo latinoamericano), la expresividad, el manejo del espacio gráfico, los recursos de la composición visual, etc.

Otras tergiversaciones del destino del libro también deben

ser consideradas como agresiones dirigidas contra la autosuficiencia lingüística. En ciertas performances realizadas por Capelán en casas ocupadas, personajes sentados sobre pilas de libros los deshojaban y arrojaban sus páginas hasta terminar destrozándolos. En contra de cierto simplismo interpretativo -que llegó a considerar este gesto como vandalismo neofascista- podría leerse esta acción en clave derrideana como un triunfo del texto sobre el libro, ante cuyo logocentrismo enciclopédico actúa la “energía rompedora, aforística de la escritura”; por eso, “la destrucción del libro...pone al desnudo la superficie del texto”¹¹.

También las sucesivas presentaciones de libros asegurados o aplastados por trozos de piedra exponen la revancha de la escritura sobre el libro, que permanece cerrado para custodiar lo ilegible y asegurar la diferencia, el suspenso -que no la anulación- del sentido. El hermetismo de los libros fuerza a rastrear otros códigos, que no revelarán la clave final pero podrán habilitar un espacio productivo para su búsqueda. Cuando pregunté a Capelán acerca de estos volúmenes sellados me contestó, tajante: “De eso no hablo”.

Supongo que tampoco hablará acerca de los libros quemados, cuyas cenizas fueron guardadas en botellas, como si se tratara de urnas que guardan el polvo de la cremación. Sin embargo, me relató la historia en la cual se basara la obra: una mujer, que no había logrado memorizar su experiencia trágica sufrida en un campo de concentración nazi, se encontró con otra, que sí recordaba la suya. Este enfrentamiento con el vacío de su memoria a través del rodeo de la memoria ajena, la conmovió de modo tal que se pasó toda esa noche escribiendo obsesivamente lo omitido. Pero, ¿cómo anotar un recuerdo en blanco? ¿cómo poner en signo un vacío? Lyotard plantea de esta manera la cuestión (que parecería estar referida específicamente a este caso): “Se trataría de recordar lo que no pudo ser olvidado porque no se inscribió...Si no se inscribió ¿es posible recordar? ¿es siquiera sensato?”¹² y responde más adelante: “Es sensato tratar

¹⁰ Paolo Fabri, *El giro semiótico*, Gedisa, Barcelona, 1999, pág. 105.

¹¹ Derrida, *De la gramatología*, cita. En Quevedo, 223.

¹² Lyotard, op.cit.pág. 62.

de recordar una cosa que no fue inscripta si la inscripción de esa cosa quebró el soporte escribible o memorable...: hay por lo tanto una presencia que destroza, que nunca está inscripta ni es memorable”¹³. Lacan dice que lo forcluido, lo que no ha ingresado en el orden simbólico, regresa como real; entonces ¿cómo ingresar ahora ese real innominado? Sigamos ahora con la historia: terminada la escritura, la mujer quemó los papeles que la sustentaban. Quemó, por lo menos los trazos caligráficos de una inscripción (no se sabe si quemó el registro del lenguaje). Salvó la escritura volviéndola ilegible, desplazando una verdad que no podía ser sostenida por palabras ni por papeles: ni siquiera por el recuerdo. Capelán completa el gesto guardando las cenizas, residuos de otros textos, en botellas clausuradas. El enigma está salvado y, con él, la posibilidad de que no se clausure el lenguaje y que tenga un lugar (diferido siempre) la presencia que destroza aunque no tenga nombre.

El Proyecto Post-Colonial Liberation Army (Desmaterialización) se plantea mediante manifiestos que, a modo de aforismos y sentencias tajantes, parten de ciertos postulados estratégicos del sistema del arte para reubicarlos en el contexto de pragmáticas diversas. Los textos impresos que componen la obra se presentan apilados sobre el piso de las instalaciones para que los espectadores los tomen; pero a veces los textos escapan del formato de la hoja de papel y circulan anónimamente por Internet (diseminándose según la lógica de la red, creando desconcierto en cuanto a sus móviles) o bien son enmarcados como si constituyeran piezas de obra gráfica. De este modo, el proyecto apela a ingeniosos juegos de lenguaje para desorientar el principismo de las consignas militantes y las sentencias canónicas referidas al arte.

La obra ironiza sobre la retórica de los sistemas del arte, particularmente sobre los manifiesto vanguardísticos y las proclamas revolucionarias de la modernidad. Pero, como todo gesto irónico cabal, no pretende éste juzgar y conde-

nar las intrincadas operaciones teóricas y las viejas fórmulas leninistas, sino hacerles un guiño de complicidad y desafiar juguetonamente sus axiomas. Busca promover, así, relecturas capaces de destrabar la gravedad dogmática y principista de los textos y hacer circular otras cuestiones, camuflándolas en la ortodoxia teórica y a contramano de ella. Capelán sustituye la figura de revolución por re-materialización y hace de este término un sinónimo, o por un lo menos una noción equivalente, al concepto derrideano de deconstrucción; busca, así, infiltrarse en terreno contrario para desajustar la ortodoxia de sus convicciones y abrir la posibilidad de lecturas paralelas. La ironía permite una “escritura de la escritura”, una distancia reflexiva por donde puede colarse la trasgresión del deseo.

Esta obra desemboca en una cuestión ética: se vincula con el imperativo de construir subjetividades alternativas y, desde ellas, asumir posturas políticas ante la historia más allá de los modelos de las vanguardias y los códigos de la organización partidaria. Es decir, construir identidades flexibles, dispuestas a participar de la esfera pública a través de posiciones contingentes; dispuestas a transgredir el orden simbólico -el propio sistema de la representación- para mirar lo que ocurre más allá de la escena y proponer salidas nuevas. Esta posición no supone olvidar la tragedia de la dictadura sino inventar otras imágenes para que no devenga ella clisé. “Nos jodieron, nos torturaron y seguimos funcionando, chico”, dice Capelán con su peculiar tono centrosudamericano. Seguimos aspirando a fundar mundos de sentido.

Las estanterías

No existen objetos intrínsecamente artísticos: ellos devienen (o no) tales según su posición contingente ante la mirada. El espectador mira y es mirado por el objeto mostrado (Benjamin, Lacan) y en algún punto, ilocalizable, brevísimo, del cruce de sus miradas, se produce un sobresalto en la significación de ese objeto, un cortocircuito, una chispa o un clic; en fin, aproximadamente eso que llamamos arte. “Cualquier

¹³ Ibidem, pag. 63

cosa expuesta en vitrina crea diagramas relacionales”, dice Capelán. Es decir, la puesta en exhibición, la presentación a la mirada de diversos objetos -independientemente de sus cualidades estéticas- constituye en sí una operación estética; obliga imaginar conformaciones y categorías, oposiciones, constelaciones.

Capelán emplea este principio para construir “ganchos”, dispositivos caza-mirada. Con los residuos mínimos, curvos, de sus propias uñas cortadas, escribe o dibuja figuras ambiguas que suspenden el significado haciéndolo oscilar entre el juego de las formas y la materialidad del resto corporal (y sus densos significados). Librementes disparadas, las asociaciones son acotadas por el trabajo ordenador de las formas que traza escrituras desconocidas, representaciones de nubes o mapas o puras geometrías abstractas (como la decoración ungular de las vasijas guaraníes que, en todo el Cono Sur americano, hacían un motivo ornamental de los surcos filosos dejados por la rítmica presión de las uñas sobre el barro).

A veces lo exhibido en una vitrina es el mismo diagrama taxonómico (el orden de una clasificación cualquiera) o la propia economía de la repetición (la disposición serial de un mismo objeto que se empecina en reiterar su presencia y, de este modo, alterarla). Por otra parte, las vitrinas remiten a la figura de la colección que, a su vez, moviliza representaciones imaginarias de categorías históricas, estéticas y sociales.

Pero las vitrinas no sólo generan asociaciones formales y despiertan resonancias significativas, también se representan a sí mismas. (Recordemos: la representación siempre tiene una instancia de autorrepresentación: el momento preferido del arte porque permite la distancia, la reflexión, la ironía). El escaparate tiene una presencia visual que incide en la configuración del espacio instalado. Pero no es una presencia material cualquiera: es la del propio dispositivo de representación. La vitrina arma un espacio para crear la ilusión de la escena. Lacan llama *bâti* a ese artificio que actúa como soporte del

deseo¹⁴: el montaje teatral que el artista construye para seducir la mirada (un gancho, diría Capelán); es decir para ocultar/mostrar el objeto e investirlo de pulsión, cargarlo de aura.

La verdad de los muros

Exhibir el mecanismo de la exhibición constituye para Capelán un expediente político que le permite reflexionar críticamente acerca del sistema del arte: su institucionalidad, sus circuitos, discursos y mitos. Comienza por revisar el soporte de inscripción de la obra, el sostén material de la representación. Los muros de las salas de exposición no son neutros; conforman el *parergon*, el contexto de la obra que interviene en su puesta. Capelán sostiene sentirse interpelado por la “verdad histórica” de los muros; por eso los considera en sus accidentes, sus ángulos y su propia presencia subvirtiendo los códigos de exhibición y rebasando las franjas virtuales que encuadran a cierta altura la visión tradicional. El propio muro deviene fondo de pintura o de dibujo; un fondo que desconoce el itinerario convencional de la mirada y la fuerza a circular de contramano, a deambular de abajo a arriba y a rastrear las señales del suelo.

Por otra parte, los dibujos anamórficos obligan a desplazamientos, perspectivas bruscas y ladeamientos forzados por la fluctuación de la mirada y, por último, resulta común el uso de superficies impropias de inscripción plástica o gráfica: rocas, papeles impresos, hojas de árboles, raíces, el propio rostro; soportes provistos de volúmenes y oquedades que quiebran la lisura del plano y entrecortan su homogeneidad. Estas operaciones permiten entender las obras como específicas: dependen estrictamente de condiciones de exhibición que remiten a un afuera de la escena. Capelán discute en cada propuesta suya las condiciones del cubo blanco: el lugar de la representación nunca es aséptico, se encuentra contaminado por las vicisitudes de extramuros, invadido por las contingencias y azares que permean y redibujan continuamente el contorno del círculo escénico y repercuten en su

¹⁴ Véase este concepto en Mayette Viltard, “Foucault, Lacan: La lección de las Meninas”, en *Litoral. La opacidad sexual II. Lacan, Foucault, ... École Lacanienne de Psychanalyse*. Edelp, 28, Córdoba, Argentina, Octubre 1999, pág. 129.

interior interceptando las posibilidades de una obra autosuficiente.

Esta discusión exige a veces trazar otro contorno más amplio que contenga (a medias siempre) el primero. El teatro dentro del teatro, la vitrina dentro de la vitrina. Los escenarios de la serie Mapas y paisajes (así como otros) constituyen no sólo salas de exposición de obras (escritos en el muro, cuadros enmarcados, objetos dispuestos en el suelo o sobre pedestales) sino obra expuesta; la instalación significa en sí misma una apelación a la mirada, una puesta en exhibición del propio espacio expositivo cuyo clima atiborrado adquiere un valor propio de presencia: los juegos de iluminación, la pintura de la pared (a veces realizada con barro), sus esquinas, su altura y su piso no se pliegan sumisos a las obras que contienen, sino que entran en tensión con ellas, disputan sentido y negocian espacios intermedios. Por ejemplo, las paredes de museos pintadas íntegramente con las manos redirigen las significaciones de las obras expuestas interfiriéndolas con connotaciones fuertes: el uso de mano de obra barata referido al trabajo de los “sudacas” en Europa, la idea de apropiación táctil del museo, el sobado sensual de sus muros recalcados en su consistencia física, etc.

Estas obras no son obras

La serie ¿Tienen alma los nativos? se basa en fotografías digitales temáticamente anodinas. Asumiendo la técnica figurativa del test de Rorschach, cada imagen es planteada como una unidad construida desde el desdoblamiento y el reflejo interno, el juego de la identidad y la diferencia. El eje virtual que divide, simétricamente, la foto y permite la duplicación invertida de sus partes introduce un indecible: resulta imposible determinar cuál es la imagen original y cuál su copia, cuál el derecho y cuál el revés. Esa situación de suspenso significativo refuerza el sentido del título, que constituye quizá el sostén de la propuesta¹⁵: la discusión colonial acerca de la plena humanidad de los indígenas. Instalar una

cuestión tan despiadada (tan des-almada) sobre una imagen formalmente hermosa, centrada y exacta, aunque ambigua en sus verdades, constituye una ironía incisiva acerca de los sistemas del arte. Por un lado, la belleza como coronación de la forma cumplida, como síntesis armónica que no deja rastros y genera satisfacción. Por otro, la insolencia de una pregunta marcada por un pasado feroz: una historia que no puede ser olvidada porque continúa teniendo consecuencias y sigue produciendo discriminación, miseria y agravio. No es gratuito que esta serie constituya un homenaje a Magritte, perverso especialista en el teatro de la representación. Resulta imposible definir una operación artística, pero entre los infinitos intentos de hacerlo, podríamos decir que hacer arte es poner un signo de interrogación sobre las cosas: introducir la sospecha sobre la transparencia de los signos que las nombran.

Ahora bien, una obra radical busca siempre vincular esa sospecha con aquella imposibilidad de definir el propio arte. Es decir, el mismo concepto de arte es etiquetado con una pregunta insoluble que impide su clausura. O con respuestas contradictorias que someten ese concepto a la paradoja: la obra expuesta en el Museo Nacional de Montevideo (2005) incluye, entre otras obras, la presencia de loros que, ubicados en jaulas individuales, repiten insistentemente la frase Soy arte o No soy arte. Algún ave lo logra hacerlo mejor que el otro, pero en general, el mensaje que transmiten es, obviamente, vacilante y confuso.

Las lecturas que abre esta propuesta son variadas y giran básicamente en torno a los límites del lenguaje y los azares de la institución museo, pero el hecho mismo de la pregunta es incómodo: alude a la reiterativa chachara de ciertos discursos sobre el arte, promueve la desconfianza sobre el estatuto de la propia obra (¿qué es arte? ¿qué no lo es?) y problematiza la validez de recursos suyos que resultan, de nuevo, políticamente incorrectos (como la utilización de animales vivos).

¹⁵ Acá me refiero sólo a una línea de connotaciones de la obra, pero es evidente que la referencia a la imagen del test sicodiagnóstico moviliza otro ámbito de significaciones, vinculadas con la representación del sujeto.

La única obra que ha trabajado Capelán bajo el nombre de video no está realizada con una cámara. La serie *Ceci n'est pas un video* pone en jaque el discurso normativo de los géneros del arte desmontando las clasificaciones basadas en la fetichización de los procedimientos técnicos. La obra consta de 48 imágenes digitales, altamente estéticas, semánticamente neutras (representan cielos, aeropuertos y lugares cotidianos), planteadas también según la iconografía del test de Rorschach y subtituladas con partes de un texto referido al contenido de la obra de arte. En *Ceci n'est pas un video* el movimiento está dado no por el trabajo fotográfico de la cámara, sino por el desplazamiento del espectador que recorre la muestra.

Esta operación permite al artista una ironía acerca de la pérdida de la noción de “imagen en movimiento” que caracteriza el video. Es que, en su mayoría, hoy los videos, aunque sigan reivindicando la pureza de sus denominaciones, son producidos cada vez más mediante programas informáticos de animación: la cámara realiza un spray fílmico editable luego de manera digital, sin movimientos verdaderos de sucesión. Capelán no busca denunciar las supuestas adulteraciones de un procedimiento técnico (el del video en este caso) sino de evidenciar la contingencia de las categorías estéticas: no importa que una obra sea o no un video, sino que resulte o no capaz de movilizar sentido. Por otra parte, el guiño a Magritte obliga a encuadrar de nuevo esta propuesta en el ámbito de los deslices de la imagen y los malentendidos de la representación: ellos no anulan la verdad de la obra, pero al desplazarla y confundirla con sus propias sombras, obligan a buscarla, una y otra vez, en otro lado.

La obra de Schopenhauer *El mundo como representación* se pregunta si la realidad humana podría ser significada adecuadamente mediante imágenes o conceptos. Capelán parte de esta obra para cuestionar, una vez más las posibilidades del lenguaje del arte de aventurarse más allá del ámbito de lo representable. En *Jet-lag Mambo* (2000) presenta una pin-

tura rodeada de citas y comentarios escritos sobre la pared y referidos al texto del filósofo alemán. La pintura, realizada con tierra, jugos de frutos y leche materna (la de su mujer, recogida mientras amamantaba ella) se encuentra en proceso constante pues depende la consistencia de su imagen de la acción del calor, que, al desteñir los tintes orgánicos, recalca los óxidos. Los propios materiales tienen marcas significantes fuertes: la figura de la leche materna, por no citar sino la más vigorosa, abre un espectro intenso y amplio de asociaciones. Sin desconocer sus resonancias, a los efectos de este texto me interesa subrayar los aspectos vinculados con el problema de la representación: de lo que existe y no se muestra entero, de lo que aparece y se sustrae, de lo invisible que, como quiere Wittgenstein, debe ser mostrado.

Son los propios materiales los encargados del juego de la presencia y la sustracción: cuando los tintes orgánicos del cuadro se apagan, sólo quedan sus indicios borrosos y oxidados. Los vestigios tienen un estatuto espectral, oscilante: son señales de las cosas sin dejar de ser parte suya. Los trazos velados que nombran la leche son no sólo imágenes de ella, sino leche real que se autorrepresenta en el teatro del cuadro. Y, al hacerlo deviene signo de sí, aunque furtivamente conserve su propia entidad (impregna el soporte, se infiltra en su cuerpo delgado, lo tiñe por dentro, produce, quizá, una mancha reseca del otro lado). Este carácter oscilante, indecible, entre su presencia real y su mera apariencia, entre su traza y su evaporación, la ubica a caballo entre el signo y la cosa. Y exige la irrupción de otras significaciones.

Durante la dictadura, las comunicaciones clandestinas entre militantes exigían escrituras invisibles: empleaban tintas realizadas con jugo de limón o almidón diluido para que el mensaje en blanco sólo pudiese ser revelado mediante el calor o una solución de yodo. Otra vez lo ilegible y sus cifras desviadas. El verdadero contenido de una representación es una representación, un manifestarse y un sustraerse a la mirada. Por eso dice Derrida que Lo ilegible no es lo con-

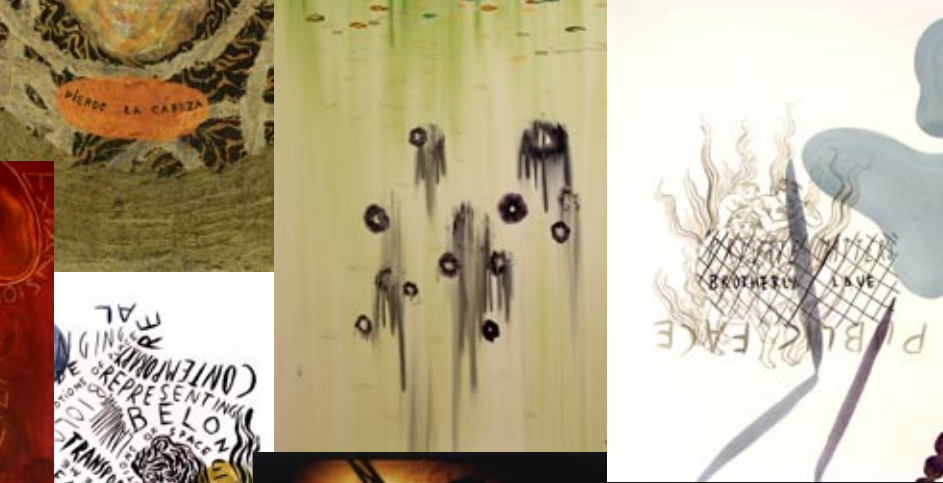
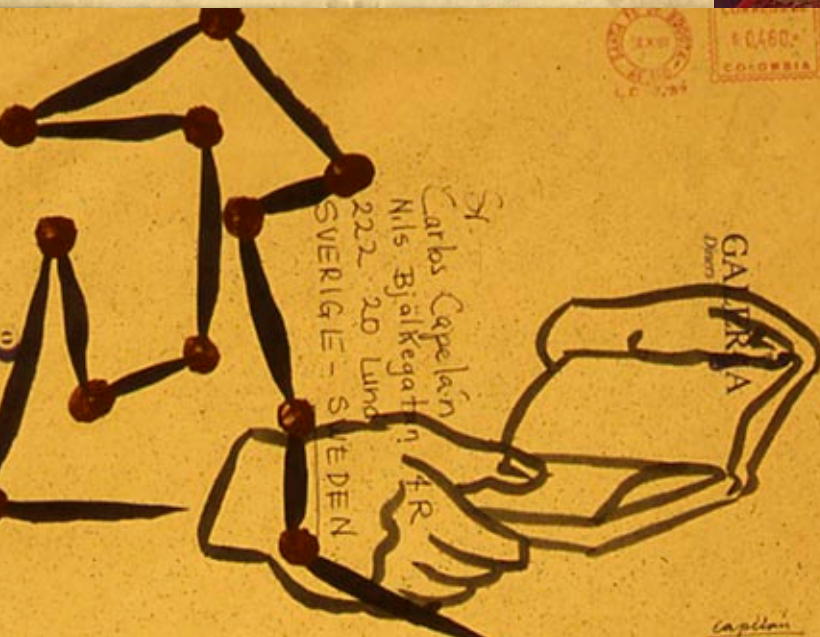
¹⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Posiciones*, Valencia, Pre-Textos, 1977, p. 161

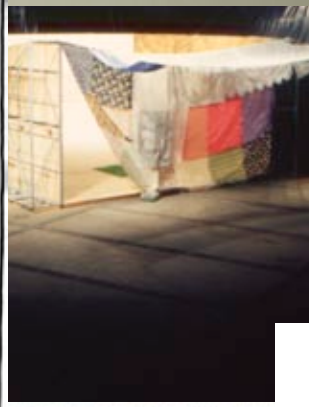
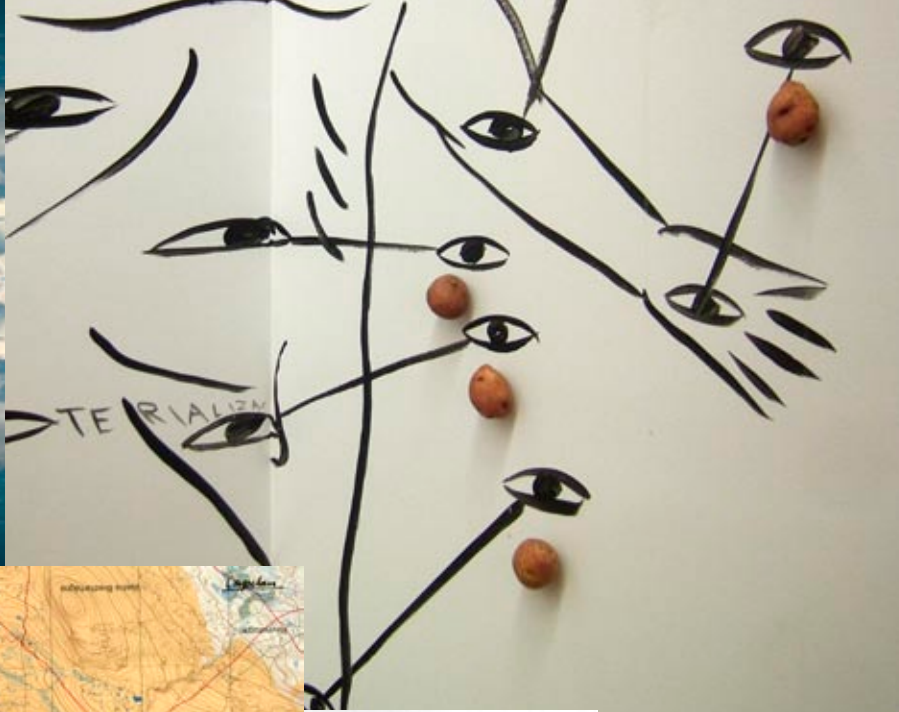
trario de lo legible: es la cuña que le da la ocasión o la fuerza para volver a empezar¹⁶. Capelán diría que lo ilegible es un gancho: una artimaña para burlar la fijeza de lo legible y ras-
trear los sentidos escritos en blanco, entre líneas o al dorso.

Enfrentado a lo ilegible, al fracaso de la representación, el arte no se conforma con emplear ingeniosamente el fort/da, el vaivén de la mirada, como si se jugara a las escondidas en un cuarto de espejos: busca en la frustración de la presencia plena (y de la plena mirada) ocasión o fuerza para volver a empezar la búsqueda de significaciones. O, lo que es más o menos lo mismo, para volver a habilitar un espacio para la pregunta. Entre otras definiciones que da al término “gancho”, Capelán se refiere a esa estrategia como “un lanzar la piedra y esperar que pasen cosas”.

Impugna así la pretensión del artista de controlar el proceso entero de significación de la obra; la intención de que su mensaje sortee interferencias y ruidos y llegue intacto al receptor. Por eso, Capelán inventa condiciones para que algo suceda: abre una escena de espera. Heidegger llama Lichtung, a esa abertura: el claro abierto por la obra de arte para aguardar el acontecimiento. En medio de habitaciones atiborradas, de páginas sobrescritas, de imágenes encimadas, Capelán introduce agudas cuñas o ganchos que desgoznan el montaje y lo entreabren, fugazmente, a la inminencia.

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Carlos Capelán – curriculum vitae

Carlos Capelán Born in Montevideo, Uruguay 1948 Lives in Lund, Sweden, Moravia, Costa Rica and Montevideo, Uruguay 2000–2006 Professor at the Vestland's Art Academy, Bergen, Norway

Studies

1978-81 Grafikskolan Forum, Malmö, Sweden

Selected separate exhibitions and installations

- 2007 SAS Institute, Stora Frösunda Castle, Stockholm, Sweden
- 2006 onlyyou / always there, Museo de Arte y Diseño Contemporáneo, San José, Costa Rica
A few words, Galerie Leger, Malmö, Sweden
onlyyou / back to the horizon, Museo de Antropología y de Arte Contemporáneo, Guayaquil, Ecuador
Carlos Capelán, dpm – arte contemporáneo, Guayaquil, Ecuador
- 2005 onlyyou / a certain notion of place, Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales, Montevideo, Uruguay
onlyyou / nobody was there, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago, Chile
onlyyou, and there was somebody there (or, 11,285 nights), Galería Metropolitana, Santiago, Chile
onlyyou, dematerialisation, rematerialisation, immaterialisation, Fundación AtlánticaTransArt, Santiago, Chile
- 2004 onlyyou, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Newcastle, England
Ceci n'est pas un video, Den 1a på Moderna, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden
Ceci n'est pas un video – or, do natives have a soul?, Galerie Leger, Malmö, Sweden
- 2003 onlyyou, paintings, drawings, objects and installations, Galería Fúcares, Madrid, Spain
Sin ti, paintings, drawings, objects and installations, Galería Trinta, Santiago de Compostela, Spain

- 2002 onlyyou, paintings, drawings, objects and installations, Bildmuseet, Umeå, Sweden
eisoptrophobia – installations and drawings, Galleri s.e, Bergen, Norway
Low Tide / Technologies, Gary Nader Fine Arts, Miami, USA
- 2001 Post-Colonial Liberation Army (rematerialización) – objetos artísticos, Galería Angel Romero, Madrid, Spain
Skatteparadiset – works from the Ulla and Greger Olsson Art Collection, Kulturhuset Valfisken, Simrishamn, Sweden
- 2000 Galerie Leger, Malmö, Sweden
Jet Lag Mambo, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo, Norway
- 1999 Hommage to the Native Nations of Germany (1999), WeltSichten, IFA Galerie, Berlin, Germany
400 metros al norte del quiosco del Morazán, Fundación TeorÉtica, San José, Costa Rica
- 1998 Galería David Pérez-MacCollum, Guayaquil, Ecuador
- 1997 A painting representing space, New Work Series, Miami Art Museum of Dade County, Miami, USA
Die Welt als Vorstellung, Galerie Monique Knowlton, New York, USA
Die Welt als Vorstellung, Galerie Leger, Malmö, Sweden
Galería Caracol, Zaragoza, Spain
La casa de la memoria, Museo Extremeño e Iberoamericano de Arte Contemporáneo, Badajoz, Spain
Galerie Le Monde de l'Art, Paris, France
- 1996 Lund's Cathedral, Lund, Sweden
- 1995 Façade, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, USA
XI Mostra America, Museu da Gravura, Curitiba, Brazil
La Zitelle, Venice, Italy
Galerie Leger, Malmö, Sweden
- 1994 Galería Fernando Quintana, Bogotá, Colombia
Galería Angel Romero, Madrid, Spain
Neuf, Maison de L'Amerique Latine, Paris, France
Song to myself, V Havanna Biennial, Havanna, Cuba

- 1993 Bedia och Capelán, Kulturhuset, Stockholm, Sweden
Thanatocenosis, Jacob Karpio Gallery, San José,
Costa Rica
De Andra, based on the book by Stefan Jonsson,
Malmö Festivalen, Malmö, Sweden
- 1992 Kartor och Landskap, Lunds konsthall, Lund, Sweden
Mapas y Paisajes, Subte Municipal, Montevideo,
Uruguay
Gallery Hertz, Bremen, Germany
- 1991 Galleri Mors Mössa, Gothenburg, Sweden
Karte – Landschaft – Raummalerie, Galleri Basta,
Hamburg, Western Germany
- 1990 Pilgrims and Relics, One Twentieth Gallery, New York,
USA
- 1989 Ronneby Art Center, Ronneby, Sweden
Galerie El Patio, Bremen, Western Germany
III Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba
- 1988 Krognohuset, Lund, Sweden
L'Espace Latinoaméricain, Paris, France
Massachusetts School of Art, Boston, USA
- 1987 superficies RITUAL imágenes, Galerie El Patio, Bremen,
Western Germany
Rituals and Surfaces, Massachusetts School of Art,
Boston, USA
- 1986 Ritual – Ytor – Bilder, Galleri Mors Mössa, Gothenburg,
Sweden
Skånska Konstmuseum, Pictura, Lund, Sweden
Galería Alternativa, Mexico City, Mexico
- 1985 Ansikte, Fotogalleri Ariman, Lund, Sweden
- 1983 Galerie Leger, Malmö, Sweden
- 1982 Centre Chaillot-Galliera, Paris, France
- 1979 Galerie Leger, Malmö, Sweden
Universidad Central, Caracas, Venezuela
- 1978 Galleriet (Anders Tornberg), Lund, Sweden

Selected group exhibitions

- 2007 Uiwang International Art Festival, Samdong, Uiwang
City, Republic of Korea
Phoenix - Parihaka, in Memories of Modernity – an
Academic and Artistic Exchange and Exhibition –
September 2007, Malmö Art Museum, Malmö, Sweden
Phoenix – Parihaka, in Memories of Modernity – an
Academic and Artistic Exchange and Exhibition – April
2007, Durban Art Gallery, Durban, South Africa
Back to the Horizon in Turbulence: 3rd Auckland
Triennial, Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand
- 2006 Diálogos, Museo Blanes, Montevideo, Uruguay
- 2005 Fake Videos of the PCLA(r) in Photo Biennale, Berlin,
Germany
Communiqués of the PCLA(r) in Political Gestures in
Art, Tesaloniki Museum, Tesaloniki, Greece, and
Museum of Contemporary Art, Florence, Italy
- 2004 Ceci n'est pas un video, c/o Sophienholm,
Sophienholm, Denmark
Jet-Lag Mambo, Svenska Hjärtan, Moderna Museet,
Stockholm, Sweden
- 2003 Autorretrato, in IV Bienal Mercosur, Porto Alegre, Brasil
Sin tí, in Juegos de Escala, Centro Galego de Arte
Contemporáneo, Santiago de Compostela, Spain
Botella ao Mar, Casa das Artes, Vigo / Auditorio de
Galicia, Santiago de Compostela, Spain
- 2002 Reality and Figuration – The Contemporary Latin
American Presence, Boca Raton Museum of Art,
Florida, USA
Maps and landscapes (the living-room), 1991-2002,
Tilflukt/Refuge, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo,
Norway
Homage a Ola Billgren, Galerie Leger, Malmö,
Sweden
- 2001 Tirana Biennale, National Gallery/Chinese Pavilion,
Tirana, Albania

- 1998 A painting representing space, in XXIV Sao Paulo Biennale, Sao Paulo, Brazil
At the speed of your steps, in Crossings, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada
Desembarco de los 33, in Bienal del Barro, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Sofia Imbert, Caracas, Venezuela
Mesótica III: Instalomesótica, Museo de Arte y Diseño Contemporáneo, San José, Costa Rica
- 1997 Algunas consideraciones sobre: la crisis de la representación en la Antropología, sobre la potencialidad del objeto artístico para representar el mundo, y sobre lo que algunos dicen que actuar desde una identidad es más divertido que simplemente representarla, o Retrato de Chih-Bai-Chih bajando una escalera, in I Bienal Mercosur, Museu de Arte de Porto Alegre, Porto Alegre, Brazil
Petit Café, Xlles Ateliers du FRAC, Grand Café, Saint-Nazaire, France
Contemporary Latin American Art, from the Ulla and Greger Olsson Art Collection, Kulturcentrum, Ronneby, Sweden
- 1996 Arbeten på papper, Galerie Leger, Malmö, Sweden
Aura, in On time, Museum of Modern Art, Stockholm, Sweden
Maps and Landscapes (the living-room), in Inclusion/Exclusion, Steirischer Herbst 96, Graz, Austria
The sleep of reason, in Five Gardens, Kulturhuset Valfisken, Simrishamn, Ystads konstmuseum, Ystad, Sweden (also curatorship)
Exhibition room #7, in Interzones, Kulturforeningen, Copenhagen, Denmark; Uppsala konstmuseum, Uppsala, Sweden
- 1995 Viajeros del Sur, Museo Carrillo Gil, México (2 installations)
Kwangju International Biennale, Seoul, Republic of Korea
Window #2: My home is your home, in Dialogues of Peace, UN Jubileum, Geneva, Switzerland
Naming songs, in SITE Santa Fe, Santa FE, New Mexico, USA
Museo Extremeño e Iberoamericano de Arte Contemporáneo, Badajoz, España
Stepping out of the white cube (a little song for Johannesburg), parts I & II, in Africus, I Johannesburg Biennale, Johannesburg, South Africa (installation in two parts)
- 1994 Humanism and Technology, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul, Republic of Korea
Ante América, Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, Kansas; Museo de Arte y Diseño Contemporáneo, San José, Costa Rica
Bienal del Pequeño Formato, Puerto Rico
Brytpunkter, Läns museerna, Stockholm Art Fair, Sollentuna, Stockholm, Sweden; Läns museerna, Jönköpings läns museum, Jönköping, Sweden
- 1993 In Fusion – New European Art, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK; Art Museum, Brighton, UK; Oriol Gallery, Cardiff, Wales, UK
Living Rites, Carla Stellweg Gallery, New York, USA
Ante América, Museo A. Otero, Caracas, Venezuela; Queens Museum, New York, USA; New Center for the Arts, San Francisco, USA
BIPOL'art, Skrylle, Sweden
- 1992 Ante América, Banco de la República – Biblioteca L. A. Arango, Bogotá, Colombia
In Progress, Oldenburg, Groningen, Germany
America, Bride of the Sun – 500 Years of American Art, Royal Museum, Antwerp, Belgium
Colectiva – Open Art, Galerie Ruf, Munich, Germany
Mostra America, Museu da Gravura, Curitiba, Brazil
Szwedzi w Polsce, Zabrze, Poland

- 1991 In Progress, Kunstler Werkstatt, Munich, Germany;
Leipzig, Germany
Gallerie Weissestadt, Köln, Germany
Art/Photography, Hasselblad Center, Gothenburg,
Sweden
- 1990 In Progress, Art Museum of Kiel, Kiel, Germany
- 1989 Latinoamérica Despierta – Latin America Awakened,
Massachusetts' School of Art, Boston, USA
Worldpictures – Picture Worlds, a moving show from
Stockholm Art Museum, Sweden
Latinamerican Art Today, Art Center of Ronneby,
Ronneby, Sweden
- 1988 Ester Almqvist – grantees, Pictura, Lund, Sweden
- 1987 Sveagalleriet, Stockholm, Sweden
- 1986 Södertälje Art Museum, Södertälje, Sweden
Moving Exhibition with Three Cuban Artists, Mexico
- 1985–
- 1986 Colart, Copenhagen, Danmark
- 1984 The Havana Biennale, Havana, Cuba
Kulturhuset, Stockholm, Sweden
- 1983–
- 1987 Por la Libertad, Europe, South and Central America
- 1978 Forumgrafik, Felix Art Club, Eslöv, Sweden

Curatorship

- 1986 Five Gardens, Kulturhuset Valfisken/Ystads konstmuseum, Simrishamn/Ystad, Sweden
- 1997 Inside us, around us, Borås konstmuseum, Borås, Sweden

Comissioned works (recent)

Cosmic portraits – project of 10 photo portraits of different art collectors, arranged by the Ulla and Greger Olsson Art Collection, 2007

Daniel and Elita Yankelwitz Collection, San José, Costa Rica

2006 – garden sculpture, bronze (1.5 x 1.5 x 1.5 m)

Central hall, Banco Lafise, San José, Costa Rica 2005 – painting on 12 panels (total size 7 x 5 m) and bronze sculpture

Represented at

Museum of Modern Art, Stockholm, Sweden; Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales, Montevideo, Uruguay; Museo Blanes, Montevideo, Uruguay; Art Museum of Gothenburg, Sweden; Art Museum of Södertälje, Sweden; Dunkers konstmuseum, Helsingborg, Sweden; Statens Konstråd, Sweden; City of Lund, Sweden; Casa de las Américas, Havana, Cuba; Centro Wifredo Lam, Havana, Cuba; Art School of Havana, Havana, Cuba; Museo Extremeño e Iberoamericano de Arte Contemporáneo, Badajoz, Spain; Centro Galego de Arte Contemporáneo (CGAC), Santiago de Compostela, Spain; Museo de Antropología y Arte Contemporáneo, Guayaquil, Ecuador; Banco Lafise Collection, San José, Costa Rica; Fundación Teor/ética, San José, Costa Rica; Instituto Cervantes, Madrid, Spain; The Auckland Art Gallery Toi O Tamaki, Auckland, New Zealand; SAS Institute, Stora Frösunda Castle, Stockholm, Sweden; Carlos & Rosa de la Cruz Collection, Miami, USA; Daniel y Elita Yankelwitz Collection, San José, Costa Rica; The Ulla och Greger Olsson Art Collection, Tommarp, Sweden; Peter Menéndez Collection, Miami, USA; Edgar Gunther Collection, Paris, France and New York, USA; Jaime del Hierro Collection, Guayaquil, Ecuador; Colección David Goldbaum, Guayaquil, Ecuador; Björn Bergentoft Collection, Sweden.

Grants and international awards

1996: Guggenheim Fellowship, USA; Bildkonstnärsfonden, Sweden; 1995: Edstranska Stiftelsen, Sweden; Bildkonstnärsfonden, Sweden; 1994: Bildkonstnärsfonden, Sweden; 1993: Bildkonstnärsfonden, Sweden; 1992: Bildkonstnärsfonden, Sweden; Swedish Institute, Sweden; Lunds kommuns kulturstipendium; 1991: Bildkonstnärsfonden, Sweden; 1990: Bildkonstnärsfonden, Sweden; 1989: Swedish Institute, Sweden; Centro Wifredo Lam, Cuba; Bildkonstnärsfonden, Sweden; 1987: Crafoordska Stiftelsen, Sweden; 1986: Award, Havana Art Biennale, Cuba; Ester Almqvist Minnesfond, Sweden; 1985: Bildkonstnärsfonden, Sweden; Studio Camnitzer, Pratt Institute, New York, USA; 1983: Bildkonstnärsfonden, Sweden; 1981: Bildkonstnärsfonden, Sweden 2007: AUT Auckland University New Zealand

Literature

Turbulence: The 3rd Auckland Triennial, Auckland Art Gallery, 128 pp, Auckland 2007
“Carlos Capelán” – por Matilde Ampuero – Revista Nueva Buho, Quito
Exit Art – 100 Artistas Latinoamericanos / 100 Latin American Artists 454 pp, 600 colour ill., bilingual edition Español / English, (cataclismo@exitmail.net, ISBN 978-84-84-934639-3-9)
“Carlos Capelán: our modernity, not theirs”, by Jonathan Friedman, in Contemporary Art and Anthropology, Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright (Eds.), Berg Publishers, Oxford 2005 (ISBN 1845201035, ISBN 1845201027)
“Broken Walks”, in Empires, Ruins and Networks – the transcultural agenda in art, Scott McQuire and Nikos Papastergiadis (Eds.), Melbourne University Press, Melbourne 2005 (ISBN 0 522 85281 1)
“La telaraña de Carlos Capelán”, by David Barro, Arte & Naturaleza, Madrid 2004
“Una charla entrevista con Carlos Capelán”, by Annika Köhler, Arte & Naturaleza, Madrid 2004
“Carlos Capelán: working in reverse order”, by David Barro

(English and Swedish text) “The ethics of collaboration”, by Nikos Papastergiadis (English and Swedish text) “Introduction”, by Jan-Erik Lundström (English and Swedish text) in onlyyou, exhibition catalogue, Monika Stedingk (Ed.) Umeå University, Umeå 2004 (ISBN 91 7305 707 X)
FILES, by Octavio Zaya, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, León 2004
“Ceci n'est pas un video”, by Ann-Sofi Noring, Exhibition catalogue, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 2004
Catastrofi Minime, Exhibition catalogue, Gianni Belloi and Arena Rojas (eds.), Museo d'Arte della Provincia di Nuoro (MAN), Nuoro 2004
“Carlos Capelán: trabajando la viceversa”, by David Barro, in onlyyou, exhibition catalogue, Galería Fúcares, Madrid 2003
Xogos de Escala, by Miguel Fernández-Cid, exhibition catalogue, CGAC / Xunta de Galicia, Santiago de Compostela 2003
“Jet Lag Mambo”, in Complex Entanglements – art, globalization and cultural difference, Nikos Papastergiadis (Ed.), River Oram Press, London, Sydney, Chicago 2003 (ISBN 1 85489 152 9)
Reality and Figuration – The Contemporary Latin American Presence, Boca Raton Museum of Art, Florida, USA, 2002 [catalogue ISBN 0-936859-45-8]
“Post-colonial Liberation Army (rematerialización)”, in Under (De)Construction – Perspectives on Cultural Diversity in Visual and Performing Arts, Marita Muukkonen (Ed.), The Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art (NIFCA), Helsinki 2002 (ISBN 951-8955-72-7)
“Yo, karma y geografía política”, por Carlos Capelán. NIFCAIN-FO (4/2001), Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art, Helsinki
Tirana Biennale, National Gallery/Chinese Pavilion, Tirana, Albania, 2001 [catalogue ISBN 88-7816-122-5]
“Paisajes en ninguna parte. Tentativas sobre seis artistas americanos” (Smithson, Ana Mendieta, Carlos Capelán, Vicente Rojo Gabriel Orozco y Hélio Oiticica) por Fernando Castro y Miguel Copón, Revista de Occidente (febrero 1997, Madrid)
“Post-colonial Liberation Army (rematerialización)”, por Carlos Capelán, Heterogénesis 35 (abril 2001)

"Jag, Karma och politisk geografi", Västerbottens-kuriren (2001-03-21)

"Carlos Capelán – relaciones complejas". Antiquaria #192 (marzo 2001).

"Jet-lag. Un viaje de ida y vuelta", Revista del Centro Gallego de Arte Contemporáneo #1, Febrero/2001, CGAC, Santiago de Compostela

"Carlos Capelán/Manuel Rufo" Arte y Parte #31, Madrid 2001

Skatteparadiset – works from the Ulla and Greger Olsson Art Collection, Kulturhuset Valfisken, Simrishamn, Sweden (Exhibition catalogue)

"Carlos Capelán's A Painting Representing Space", by Thomas McEvilly, in Converge, vol. 1, Miami Art Museum, Miami 2000

"No pierdas la calma – o, Yo no quiero ser buenamoza", por Carlos Capelán, en Ana Tiscornia – Citas y abreviaturas, TEOR/ética, San José 2000

Sin título – por Carlos Capelán, en Ana Tiscornia – Citas y abreviaturas, TEOR/ética, San José 2000

"Carlos Capelán", by Gavin Jantjes, Jet Lag Mambo catalogue, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Høvikodden 2000

"400 metros al norte del quiosco del Morazán – reflexiones sobre la figuración del Lugar", by Virginia Pérez-Ratton, Publicaciones Teorética #3, San José 1999

"Seeing between the lines", by Germaine Koh, Fecit, San José 1999 (CD-R publication)

"A Walk", by Annika Capelán Köhler and Carlos Köhler Capelán, in Priscilla Monge – polisemia / ambigüedad. Exhibition catalogue, TEOR/ética, San José 1999

"Una caminata", por Annika Kohler Capelán y Carlos Capelán Köhler, en Priscilla Monge – polisemia / ambigüedad. Catálogo de exhibición, TEOR/ética, San José 1999

"Gavin Jantjes in conversation with Carlos Capelán". In A Fruitful Incoherence: dialogues with artists on internationalism. Gavin Jantjes and Rohini Malik, Editors. INIVA, London 1997

"En kurators föresatser/Curatorial intentions", by Carlos Capelán, preface to the catalogue for Runt om oss, inom oss/Around

us, inside us, Borås Konstmuseum, Borås 1997 (in Swedish & English)

"Försvar av Picasso, Sankt Lars och det gamla Café Ariman i Lund", by Carlos Capelán, in Aspekter på Modernismen, Kulturen årsbok 1997, Lund

"El pasado como experiencia subjetiva", by Ivonne Pini, Art Nexus 23, Enero-Marzo 1997

"Contemporary Latin American Art", from the Ulla and Greger Olsson Art Collection, Kulturcentrum, Ronneby, Sweden, 1997 (Exhibition catalogue)

"Four gardens, and one in exile", by Pontus Kyander, Material 30 (fall 1996)

"México, sobre viajes, mapas y espejos", by Paulo Herkenhof, catalogue for Viajeros del Sur, Museo Carrillo Gil, México City 1996

"Två svenskar på väg att erövra världen", by Monica Nieckels, Konstvärlden 4 1996

" Några ord från kuratorn/Words from the curator", by Carlos Capelán, preface to the catalogue for Fem trädgårdar/Five Gardens, Lund 1996 (in Swedish & English)

"Förnuftets sömn/The sleep of reason", by Carlos Capelán, catalogue for Fem trädgårdar/Five Gardens, Lund 1996 (in Swedish & English)"

" De världsvida perspektiven", by Pontus Kyander, Sydsvenska Dagbladet (13/08/96)

"Storm i trädgårdslandet", by Pontus Kyander, Sydsvenska Dagbladet (3/08/96)"

"Konst i kryptan upprör Lundabor", by Yens Wahlgren, Sydsvenska Dagbladet (17/07/96)"

"Capelán från Lund konstnär i världen", interview with Carlos Capelán by Pontus Kyander. Dagens Nyheter – Kultur & Nöjen, sid 1 (20/12/1995)"

"The Rorschach shirt syndrome (I Listen to my Neighbour Do the Laundry)", by Carlos Capelán. Delivered at The Marco Polo

Syndrome. Problems of intercultural communication in art theory and curatorship – the Latin American example. International symposium at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin December 11-12, 1995. (text published in <http://www.capelan.com>)

“De luz e de sombra” interview with Carlos Capelán by José Carlos Fernandes. *Gazeta do Povo*, Caderno G (31/10/1995). Curitiba, Brasil

“Towards a world-class city? Report from Johannesburg”, by Thomas McEvilley, *Art in America*, September 1995.

“Die 5. Biennale von Havanna und brasilianische Kunst im 20. Jahrhundert”, by Karin Stempel, *Pantheon*, Jahrgang LII 1994

“En uruguayansk konstnär i Skåne – hans retro-praxis”, by Clemens Altgård i *Om retrogardism* by Clemens Altgård & Håkan Sandell. Ellerströms, Lund 1995”

“Cover presentation”, by Ivonne Pini, *Art Nexus* 14, Oct-Dec 1994

“Arte, postmodernidad y periferia en América Latina”, José Bedia, Carlos Capelán, Arturo Duclós, Ticio Escobar, Frederic Jameson, Martín López, Gerardo Mosquera, Ivonne Pini, Celia S. de Birbragher, *Art Nexus* 14, Oct-Dec 1994”

“El ojo te está mirando”, by Gerardo Mosquera. *Carlos Capelán – New Paintings*, catalogue for Fernando Quintana Gallery, Bogotá 1994”

“Carlos Capelán: texts and spirits”, by Gerardo Mosquera. *Third Text* 26, Spring 1994

“Carlos Capelán: textos y espíritus”, by Gerardo Mosquera. *Atlántica* 6, Febrero 1994

“Carlos Capelán”, by Pehr Mårtens. Catalogue for the V Havana Biennial. Havana 1994

“Carlos Capelán – En Route”, by Pehr Mårtens. *Canto a mí mismo* catalogue for the V Havana Biennial. Lund 1994

“Carlos Capelán”, by Cathérine David. *Canto a mí mismo* catalogue for the V Havana Biennial. Lund 1994

“Carlos Capelán”, by Cathérine David. *Neuf, Maison de l’Amérique Latine*, Paris 1994

“European fusion”, by Sandy Nairne. *Frieze* 11, Summer 1993

“Carlos Capelán”, by Carla Stellweg, in *In Fusion – New Euro-*

pean Art. Southbank Canter, London 1993

Bedia och Capelán – *Resa i Sverige*, by B. Sydhoff, E. Haglund, C. Medina & P. Mårtens. Kulturhuset, Stockholm 1993

“Carlos Capelán”, by Luis Camnitzer, in *Carlos Capelán – Kartor och landskap*. Lunds Konsthall, Lund 1992 (Swedish and English version)

“The restricted redefinition of art”, by Luis Camnitzer, in *Carlos Capelán – Kartor och landskap*. Lunds Konsthall, Lund 1992 (Swedish and English version)

“The implosion of modernity – The treacherous present”, by Jonathan Friedman, in *Carlos Capelán – Kartor och landskap*. Lunds Konsthall, Lund 1992 (Swedish and English version)

“Cutting the roots”, by Oscar Hemer, in *Carlos Capelán - Kartor och landskap*. Lunds Konsthall, Lund 1992 (Swedish and English version)

“Preface”, by Cecilia Nelson, in *Carlos Capelán – Kartor och landskap*. Lunds Konsthall, Lund 1992 (Swedish and English version)

“In the world with Carlos Capelán”, by Rachel Weiss, in *Carlos Capelán – Kartor och landskap*. Lunds Konsthall, Lund 1992 (Swedish and English version)

“Carlos Capelán – Landscape and Map”, by Carla Stellweg, in *America, Bride of the Sun*, edited by Catherine de Zegher. In-schoot Books, Antwerp 1992

“Carlos Capelán – Mapas y Paisajes”, by Alicia Haber. *Intendencia Municipal de Montevideo*, Montevideo 1992

“Carlos Capelán”, by Rachel Weiss, in *Ante América*. Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, Bogotá 1992

“Remarks”, by Carlos Capelán, in *Being America*, edited by Rachel Weiss and Alan West. White Pine Press, New York 1991

Karte – Landschaft – Raummalerie, by Dietmar Brandstädter. Verein Basta, Hamburg 1991

Capelán, by Göran Lundstedt. *Symposium and Scripta Sancti Petri*, Lund-Stockholm 1986

Lectures and seminars

- 2007 Turbulence 2007, conference, Auckland Museum, Auckland, New Zealand
Artist in Residence, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand
Talk, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand
Talk, Govett-Brewster Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand
- 2006 Asedios Críticos. Carlos Capelán ONLY YOU: siempre allí + pcla(r), Museo de Arte y Diseño de Costa Rica, San José, Costa Rica
Qué Centroamérica? Conference and open debate, Museo de arte y Diseño de Costa Rica, San José, Costa Rica
Memories of Modernity, conference, Durban, South Africa
Crossing Horizons: Context and Community in the South, South Project Conference, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Santiago de Chile, Chile
Talk, School of Fine Arts, Guayaquil, Ecuador
Talk, Museo de Antropología y Arte Contemporáneo, Guayaquil, Ecuador
- 2005 Talk and workshop, Department of Art, University of Valdivia, Chile
Talk, Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales, Montevideo, Uruguay
Notions of self in the practice of contemporary art, talk at Fundación Rojas, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Contemporary Horizons, talk, with Nikos Papastergiadis, Galeri Signal, Malmö, Sweden

- 2004 Broken Walks, academic performance and panel discussion, at Empires, Ruins and Networks: Art in Real Time Culture, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne, Australia
Talk, Umeå School of Fine Arts, Sweden
A month long seminar in Argentina with students from the Umeå School of Fine Arts, Sweden; in collaboration with Mónica Girón
Panel discussion at Forum Moderna: Pressures on art criticism, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden
Symposium and workshop, with Nikos Papastergiadis, TeorÉtica, San José, Costa Rica
- 2003 Academic performance and panel discussion at Forum Moderna: Globalization, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden
Academic performance and talk, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Cátedra de Andrea Giunta, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Academic performance and talk, Museo Blanes, Montevideo, Uruguay
From the cooked to the raw, a multidisciplinary conference at the Valand's School of Fine Arts, Gothenburg, Sweden
Symposium, TeorÉtica, San José, Costa Rica
Debate on Ethics and Contemporary Art, Arco Art Fair 2003, Madrid, Spain
- 2002 Talk, Valand's Art Academy, Gothenburg, Sweden
Gallery talk, onlyyou, Bildmuseet, Umeå
- 2001 Art and artist in the age of global culture, workshop at "ARS 2001", in collaboration with the Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art (NIFCA), Helsinki
Museer, mångkultur och globalisering, panel discussion in "Det demokratiska museet – Museiveckan", Umeå, Sweden
Seminarium, CEGAC/Vestlandets kunstakademi, Bergen, Norway

- 2000 Panel discussion: "La acción y su huella", Performance-art seminarium, CGAC, Santiago de Compostela, Spain
Visiting Artist, workshop, Maestría de Artes Plásticas y Visuales, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia
Seminarium, CEGAC/Vestlandets kunstakademi, Santiago de Compostela, Spain
- 1997 Art, design and ecology. Seminarium, Vestlandets kunstakademi, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway
Personal tutorials and lecture. Vestlandets kunstakademi, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway
Visiones del arte latinoamericano. Symposium, Museo Extremeño e Iberoamericano de Arte Contemporáneo, Badajoz, Spain
- 1996 Mesótica 1996. Symposium, Museo de Arte y Diseño Contemporáneo, san José, Costa Rica
Seminarie. Lunds Stifts Kyrkospel. Lund, Sweden
Workshop. Casa de Murillo, Facultad de Bellas Artes, Sevilla, Spain
- 1995 The Place of Place – SITE Santa Fe. Symposium, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA
Workshop at the Studio Camnitzer, Valdottavo, Italy
Las bienales de 1994. Symposium, Museo de Arte y Diseño Contemporáneo, San José, Costa Rica
The Marco Polo Syndrome. Problems of intercultural communication in art theory and exhibiting – Latin America as an example. Symposium, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Germany
- 1994 Lecture, Tadeo Lozano University, Bogotá, Colombia
Lecture, Fernando Quintana Gallery, Bogotá Colombia
Lecture, Museo Blanes, Montevideo, Uruguay
Symposium, V Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba
- 1993 The Global Village, in connection with the separate exhibition Kartor och Landskap, Lunds konsthall, Lund, Sweden
Arts International, Barcelona, Spain
New European Art, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK
New European Art, Oriel Gallery, Cardiff, Wales, UK
About European Identity, televised round table discussion, Channel Four, London, UK
The Missing Link, BIPOL'art Symposium, Lund, Sweden
Lecture, Museo de Arte, San José, Costa Rica
Lecture, Heredia School of Art, Heredia, Costa Rica
- 1992 Seminary, Biblioteca L. A. Arango, Bogotá, Colombia
Lecture, Estudio Cubo del Sur, Montevideo, Uruguay
Lecture, Estudio Nelbia Romero, Montevideo, Uruguay
- 1989 Seminary, the Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba
- 1988 Signs of Everyday Life, Massachusetts School of Art, Boston, USA
Two seminaries, Molino de Santo Domingo, Mexico City, Mexico

Photographers

Miguel Peña: pages 13/20/27/40/41/71/78/79/80/81/89
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