MATTHIEU MARTIN

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BORN IN 1986 IN BAYEUX, FRANCE
LIVES AND WORKS IN BERLIN

Since his beginnings in graffiti Matthieu Martin
has been deploying his research within urban
space. His installations or interventions are
inspired by the way public space is controlled,
both visibly and invisibly. The artist takes hold of
the forbidden, which he transforms into creations
that are sometimes poetic, sometimes critical,
often imbued with irony.
After his participation in the second Ekaterinburg
Biennale in Russia, constructivist and utopian
architecture has taken an important place in
his research, particularly around the idea of
reactivating his ideas today. Since 2012, he has
also had a studio in Berlin, a city located on a
dividing line between East and West, which are
now at the heart of his preoccupations.

Exhibition view at Pavillon de l'Arsenal, Paris, 2015

Povera mobility, 2020

**Rocks, pivoting wheels, braking
system
14 parts
Dimensions variable**

The series Povera Mobility turns
rip-rap blocks used to delimitate
and prohibit flows in urban spaces
into sculptures on wheels. Matthieu
Martin plays with
in-betweens, temporal and territorial
short circuits. These ones lead to
a critical reading of the relation of
the individual to its environment,
of the signs and systems that build
it, creating a disappearance, a
displacement or a wandering where
a fixed order or a planned mobility
would like to stand.

« The rock, which is placed to
prevent unauthorized parking by
some town councils, becomes mobile
here: the critical reinterpretation
of this urban practice results in an
object which is not devoid of poetry.
»

Jean Max Colard

**Exhibition view at BEMA space, Quéretaro (Mx), 2020**

Wall drawing n°3, 2020

Grip tape
Variable dimensions

Started during a residency in Mexico, the series entitled Wall Drawing displays on the wall the same grip tape that is used to « protect » artworks in museums. This simple gesture, displacement from the ground floor to the wall completely annihilate the protection device that becomes the work of art itself.
This work can be seen a complement contribution to ongoing series of work on paper principe de précaution, that inventories protection devices in museum.



Exhibition view at BEMA space, Quéretaro (Mx), 2020
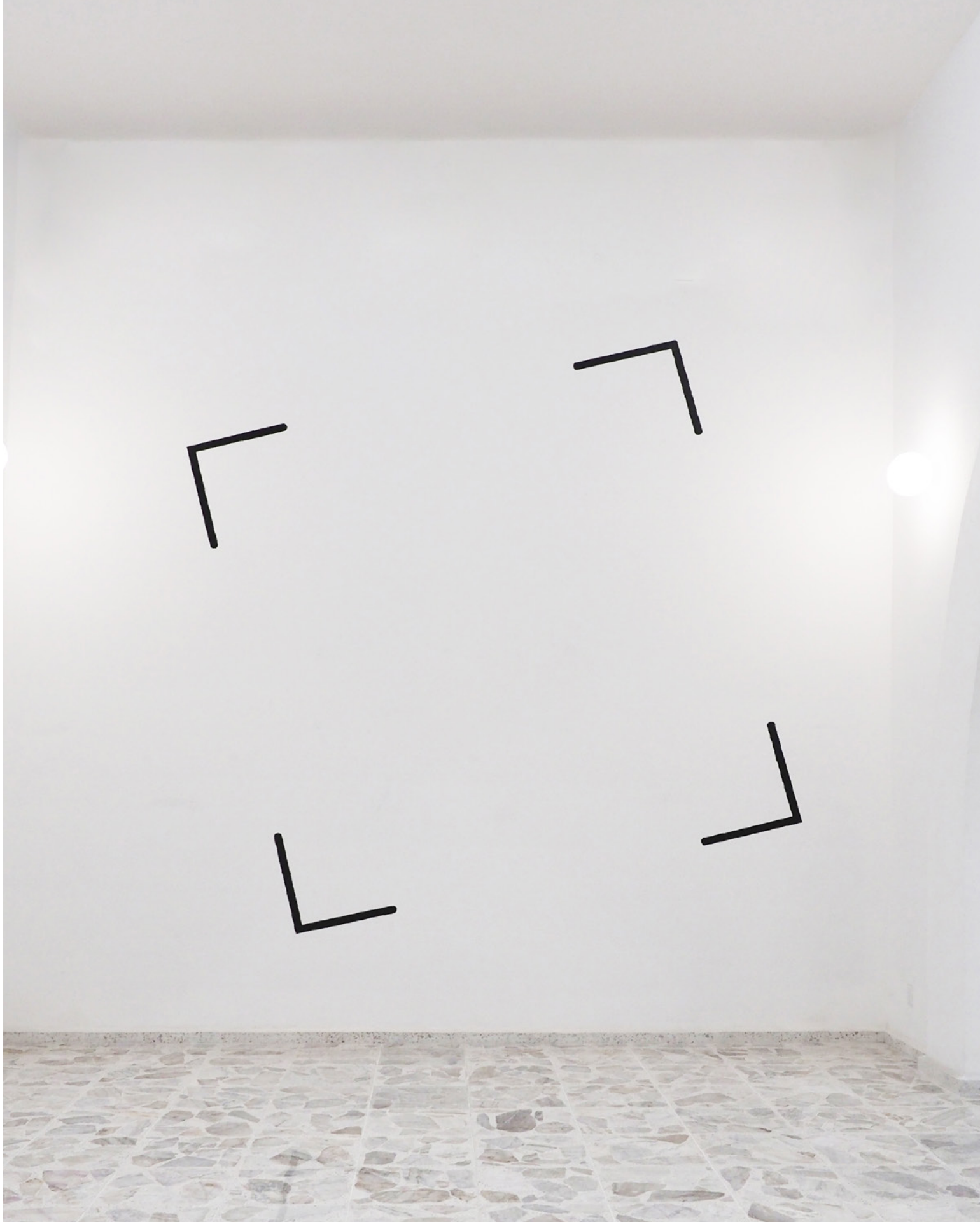
Sprayed, (Chrome), 2020

Inkjetprint
69 parts
21 x 29,7 cm each
Overall dimensions variable

In the series Sprayed, pages of
graffiti magazines are covered with
spray paint to erase graffitis shown
inside the magazine.
In Aurisacrafame an entire maga-
zine is dismantled and repainted.
Pages with advertisements are
removed for the composition and
leave an empty space that dynamise
the composition.
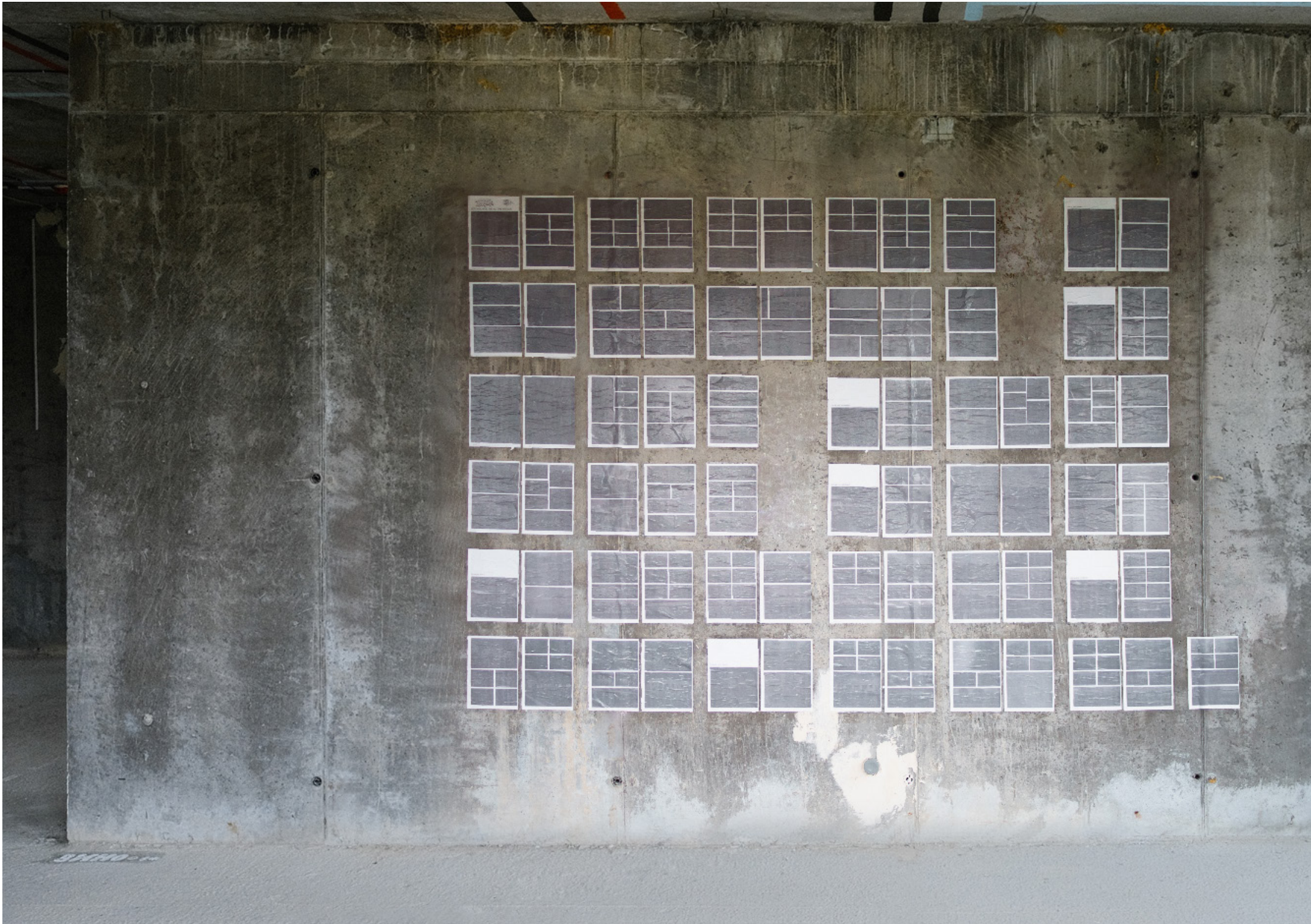
La valse de Vladimir, 2018

video projection, color, loop
Sound by Peter Theremin
**6'25'**
Dimensions variable
Ed. of 5, 2 A.P.

The Waltz of Vladimir, 2018 was filmed on the banks of the Oka river in Dzerzinsk, Russia, where Vladimir Shukhov built the world's only diagrid hyperboloid transmission tower in the late 1920's. During the drone flight around the tower, the structure itself seems to move in the air and engage a sort of dance with the camera that became the partner. A very intense exchange in which we can discover a new perspective on the avantgarde architecture.

«The images in Matthieu Martin's film reveal the immensity of the Shukhov tower, its serious yet light personality, and its eternal fragility. The film being shot from a camera mounted on a drone offers us a radiant choreography, a mystical and mathematical nuptial dance around and inside this hand-painted book; an architectural rationalism that seems straight out of 3D design software contrasts with the natural setting that surrounds it. And yet, the Shukhov tower appears terribly human, full of a simple dignity that only needs to flourish in the uchronia of Matthieu Martin's film.»

Nicolas Audureau

Exhibition view at Aperto Raum, Berlin, 2019. Photo by Katharina Kritzler
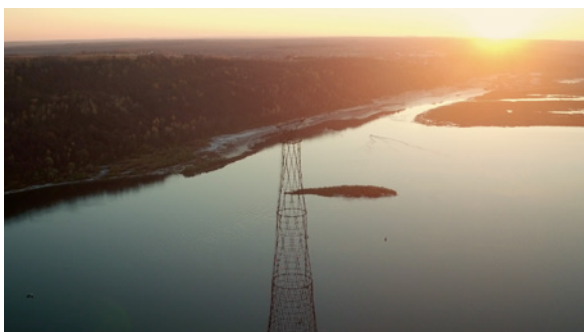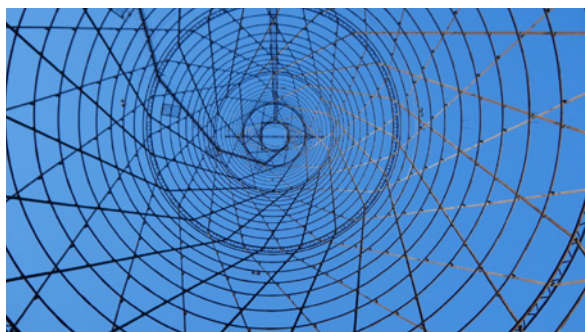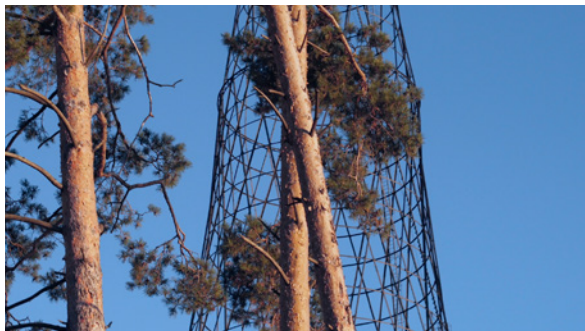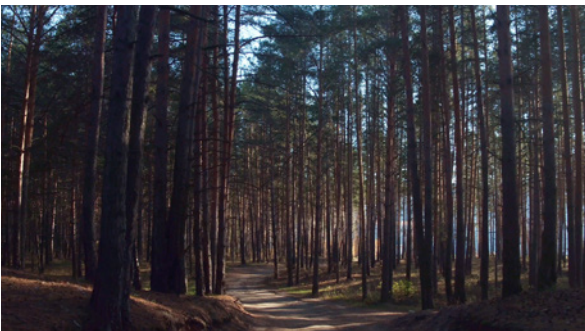
La valse de Vladimir, 2018, (film still)

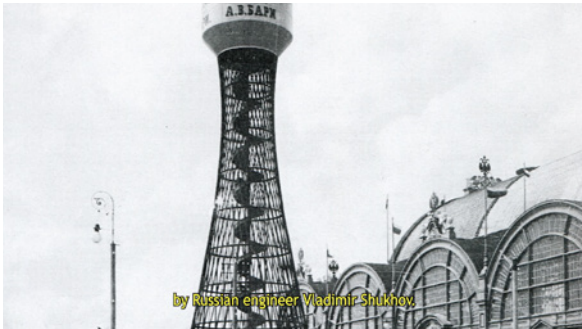## The Russian Detroit, 2018

Color video, monitor
**11'31'**
Ed. of 5, 2 A.P.

The film "Russian Detroit", 2018 brings the viewer to the heart of the utopian city of Avtozavod (Russia). Throughout the story the viewer is slowly transported back into the time of 1929, when the Soviet government contracted the American company Ford to create the "first socialist city in the world" with the architect Albert Kahn. It was the first city built in Russia after the revolution and the biggest car factory in Europe at its time – a copy of the "Ford Rouge Factory" in Detroit, Michigan. The contemplative journey into the "Soviet Detroit", enables us to see the vitality of the city today, the former realm of the socialist dream and – when looking at the master plan – to follow the almost hidden traces of the American presence.

Matthieu Martin's two films (The Russian Detroit and La valse de Vladimir) invite us to question the place of the artists themselves in the construction of these stories and their excavating power; and on this part of commitment, finally, which was the seed of the avant-gardes in the construction of the worlds of tomorrow. Without rewriting history in a dogmatic way, the artist takes an ethical position: that of participating in the choice and enlightenment of forgotten or unknown stories, contributing to broaden the alternativity of our future stories.

Nicolas Audureau

Exhibition view at Aperto Raum, Berlin, 2019. Photo by Katharina Kritzler
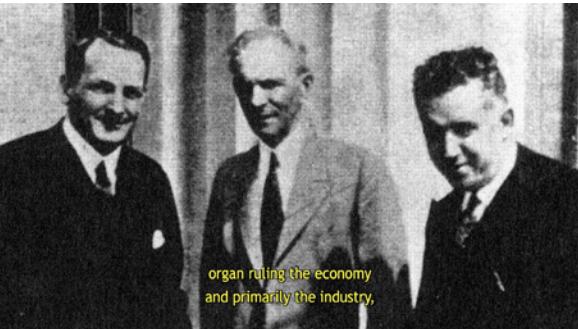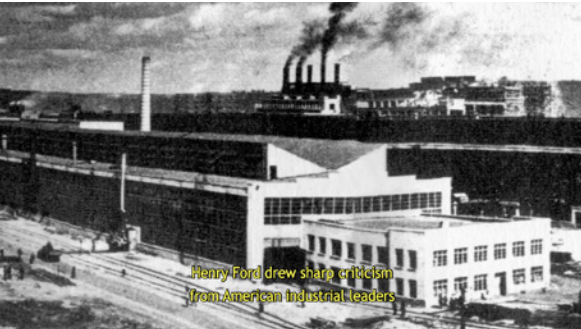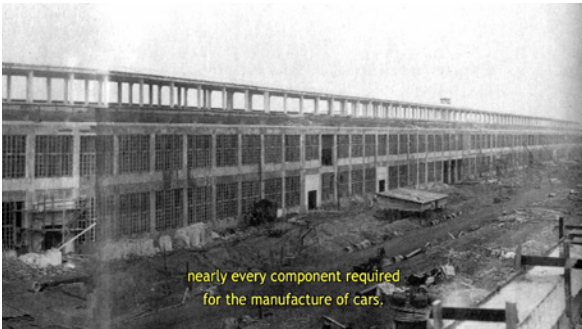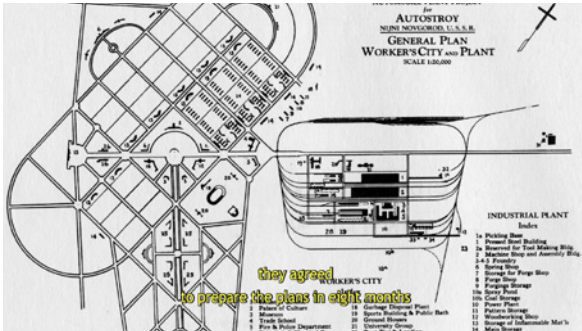
The Russian Detroit, 2018, (film still)

Blues, 2014

**Glass-fiber sailing boat, Aluminium
street lamp, solar panel, battery,
stainless steel, electric cables, nut,
bolt, anchor
600 x 550 x 150 cm**

Always working in relation to the site I used the invitation to work in the harbor city of Cuxhaven, to produced new work to fit the little pond, without any real utilities, in the middle of the city center. For this particular place I proposed to created a piece associating a sailing boat and a street light. Almost invisible during the day the sculpture plays with our habits and becomes more visible when the light turns on following the rhythm of the city's lights.

The work was first presented in Cuxhaven, and since then traveled to several cities in France like, the Bourgogne canal, Valognes and Le Havre.

Installation view in Le Havre (Fr), 2018. Photo by Julien Paquin

Cover Up, 2009-2017

2 Slideshows projection (300 photographs)
13'28'
Dimensions variable

In 2017 the cover up series was updated by a new slide-show projection gathering images made between 2014 and 2017.

Principe de précaution, (Centre Pompidou) 2016

Pencil and marker pen on paper
8 parts
42 x 60 cm each, Frame: 184.5 x 134.3

Principe de Précaution is an ongoing series of drawings that inventories all kinds of protection devices displayed in front of artworks in institutional spaces: museum, gallery, art fairs, etc...
Using a minimal aesthetic, drawings are only composed of lines which differ in thickness when representing architectural volume or protection devices. Artworks are removed from the exhibition spaces that become abstract, full of disciplinary signs that more and more overrun public spaces.

"In his own way Matthieu Martin responds actively to Agamben's question: "What strategy must we follow in our everyday hand-to-hand struggle with apparatuses"?"

Jean Max Colard
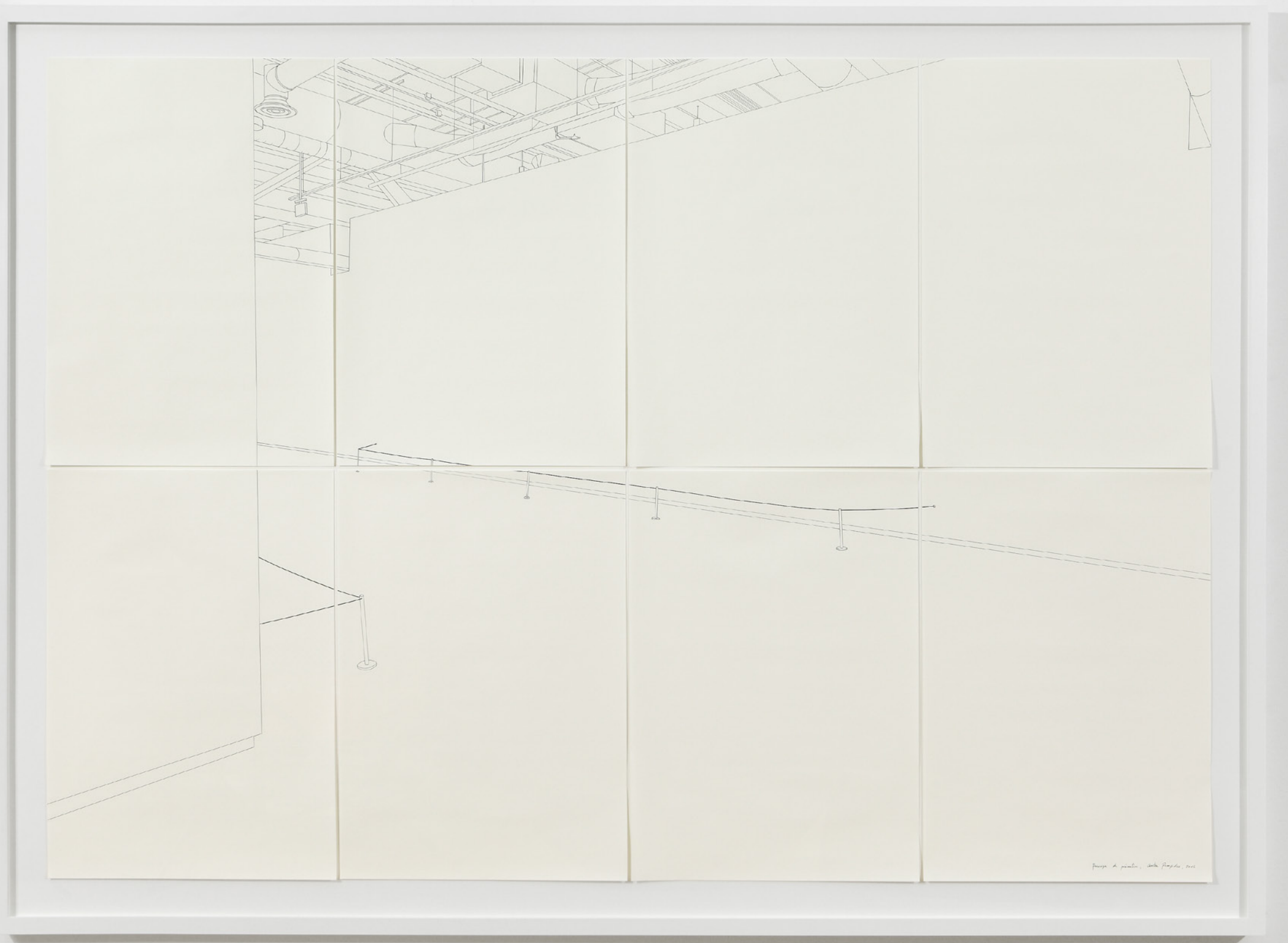
Sprayed (Aurisacrafame)
2014

Spraypaint, glossy paper.
87 parts
21 x 30 cm each
Overall dimensions variable

In the series Sprayed, pages of graffiti magazines are covered with spray paint to erase graffitis shown inside the magazine.
In Aurisacrafame an entire magazine is dismantled and repainted. Pages with advertisements are removed for the composition and leave an empty space that dynamise the composition.

Sprayed (Aurisacrafame), 2014, Exhibition view at Abbatiale Saint-Ouen, Rouen, (Fr) 2016. Photo by Julien Paquin
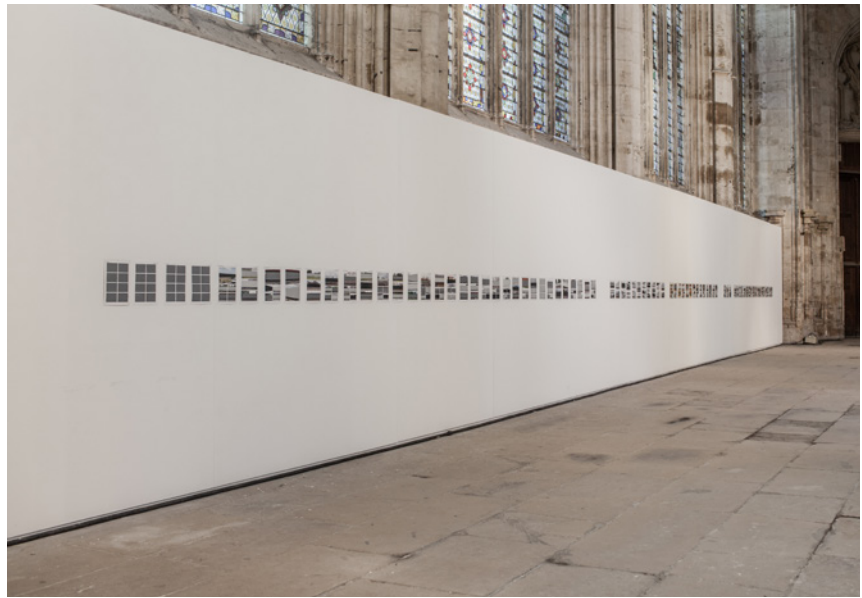
Exhibition view at Abbatiale Saint-Ouen, Rouen, (Fr) 2016. Photo by Julien Paquin

Principe de précaution, 2012-present

Serie of 36 drawings
**Pencil and marker pen on paper**
21 x 29,7 cm. Frame: 31.3 x 22.4 cm
Overall dimensions : 237.8 x 184.4 cm.

"Matthieu Martin's work focuses on the organization and hierarchization of space (institutional, public, urban) to interfere with their logics of standardization and control. Against the imposed borders, the restrained mobility (for instance, the suppression of street furniture elements for safety reasons), the artist proposes forms of transportation, which are at the same time physical, mental and symbolical. In Principe de Précaution, pen and felt-tip marker drawings drafted after photos of institutional places taken by the artist (museums and galleries in Russia, France, Germany, United States...) show the museum measures that aim to protect the artworks and control the visitors' behaviors. The works are not represented, their titles are not indicated. Through this absence, the exhibition spaces seem abstract, structured by lines and empty surfaces, which accentuate the tension between limit and crossing, visible and invisible. The documenting function of the photos is erased in the drawings and a new hierarchy of sense comes out. Through his committed stance, Matthieu Martin takes place within a history of conceptual art where drawing stands for a tool, symbolizing a mental and subjective cartography as well as spatial displacements (Stanley Brouwn), and questioning what defines a space and what delimitates the look in order to send the spectator back to his own perception (Measurements series of Mel Bochner, 1968-69)."

Alice Laguarda
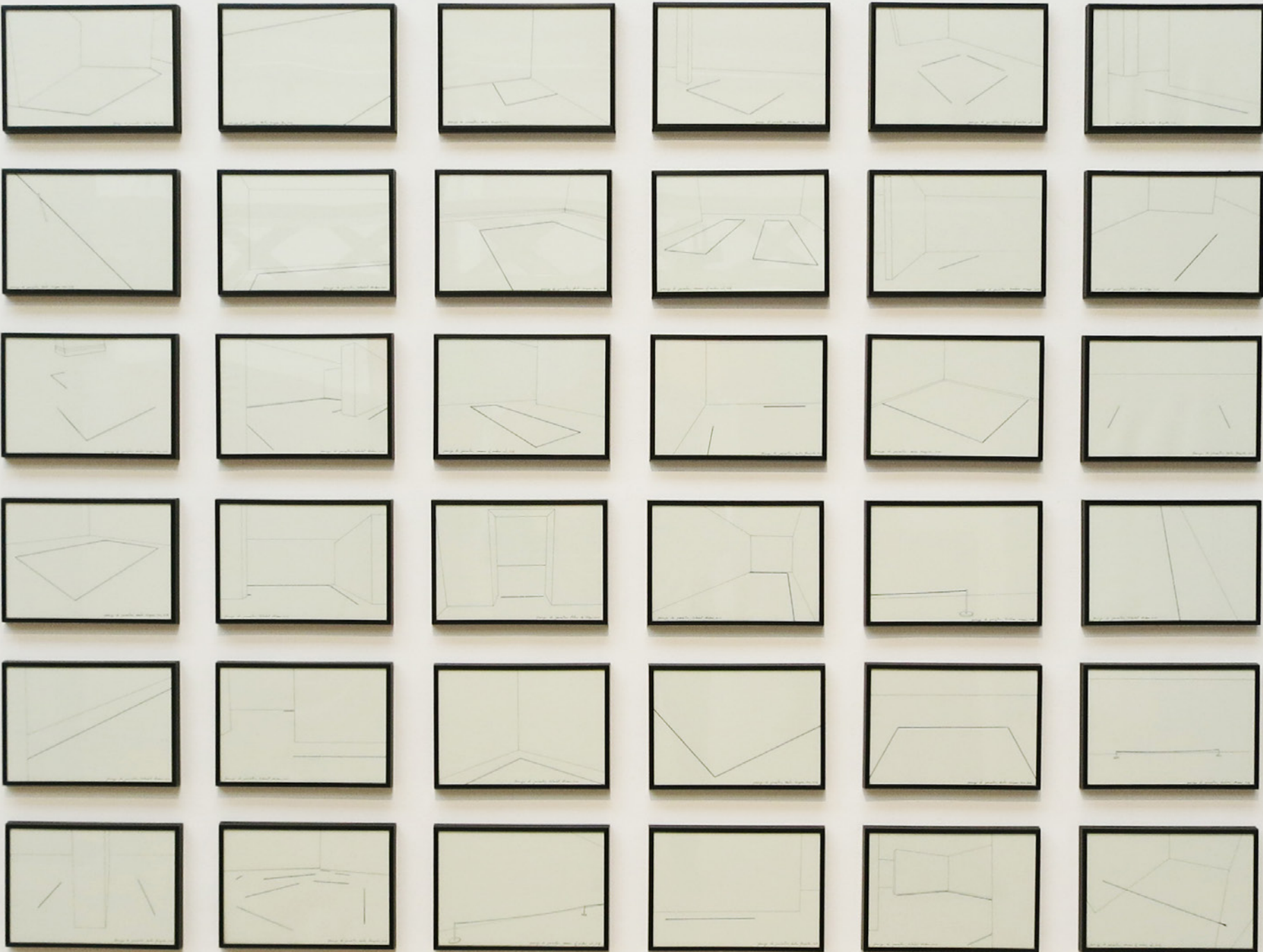
Exhibition view at Pavillon de l'Arsenal, Paris, 2015

**Refresh the Revolution,
2012**
**(film still), color video, sound,
loop**
10'51"
Ed of 5 + 2 A.P.

Constructivist architecture
repainted in its original
colors (1929). Architect:
Mosei Reicher.

Refresh the revolution is an
ambitious action made for
the Second Ural Biennale
in Ekaterinburg in 2012.
The aims of the project was
to give back light to an old,
abandoned avantgarde build-
ing from the 1920's Russian
revolution. The final video
work shows the artist and his
team putting off the adver-
tisement posters, removing
the spontaneous vegetation
and covering all tags and
graffiti with white paint. The
massive crane used by the
painters turn around the
1927 building and slowly
the constructivist architec-
ture recovers its vitality and
imposing figure in the urban
area that's surrounding it.

Exhibition view at the 2nd Ural Biennale of Contemporary Art, 2012, Ekaterinburg, Russia. Photo by Alex Kiryutin

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"I can't tell if the act of repainting is as powerful an act as a revolution, I don't know if refreshing this revolution is just what needs to be done in the shambolic capitalist mess of an old Soviet territory, but what I know is that, in Ekaterinburg, one artist came and over a single Biennial, he offered the city the opportunity to question anew its architectural and artistic heritage. And this no doubt is art, and this no doubt is politics. "

David Liaudet
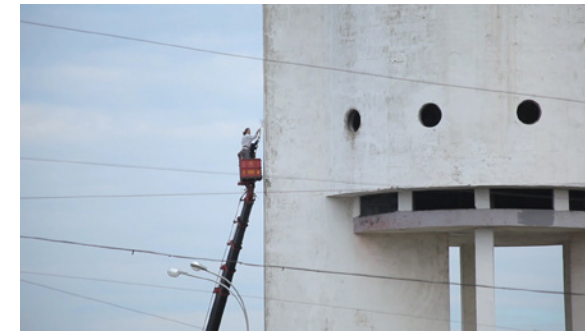
Refresh the Revolution, 2012 (Film still)

**The White Tower
(one day after repainting)
2012-2016**

**Set of 7 color photographs
28,5 x 42,75 cm. Frame 33,1 x 47,2 cm
Ed of 3 + 1 A.P**

This series of 7 photographs was
made one day after the action
Refresh the revolution. The series
is only composed by close up views
on the white tower architecture
and was only made possible
after the action of repainting the
architecture.

Exhibition view at Aperto Raum Berlin, 2017. Photo by Katharina Kritzler

6999 oaks, 2012

Project for a public competition in Caen (Fr)
Chipboard, styrofoam, modeling figure
30 x 53 x 7 cm

Displacement to Caen, France, of one of the 7000 oak trees planted by Joseph Beuys in 1982 for the Dokumenta 7 in Kassel, Germany.

Joseph Beuys works 7000 oaks, is one of the major contribution in the field of contemporary art to the ecological mouvement. With this action, Beuys wanted to show the nessecity of protecting the biosphere. 30 years later, in reaction to the way the new place Saint Sauveur in Caen was conceived (without any square of green space), I proposed to use the public order for the production of a new piece of art and proposed to move one of the 7000 oak trees planted by Joseph Beuys in 1982 for the Dokumenta 7 from Kassel to Caen. A way to place nature in the center of our preoccupation again and to remind us that this action of planting, should never stop if we want to preserve the livability of our cities center.

Assis-debout, 2011

**Video projection, color, sound
2'41"
Ed. of 3 + 1 A.P**

Shaping of the interspace corresponding to the "Assis-Debout" (Sit-Stand) term (new type of urban planning which aims to move the homeless people). Through the so called "the chair" motion, the tight body comes in contradiction with various types of street furniture and question the viewers about the way public space is sometime designed against a certain part of the population.

Cover up, 2009-2011

**Slideshow projection
(58 photographs),
2'54" Dimensions variable
Ed. of 5 + 2 A.P**

Cover Up is a photographic
documentation of graffiti covered
with paint by different authority.

"The photographic samples made
by Matthieu Martin in the course
of his wanderings through various
metropolises, filled with graffiti and
concealments alike, invite us to stop
so as to perceive their formal richness
and narrative treasures. For, beyond
the visual attractions, a story emerges
with already at least three episodes
respectively situated in the present, the
future and the past. We see the picture,
we guess what is out of frame and we
imagine the offered pattern, fixed like
a butterfly in an everlasting suspended
time, a sort of eternal present. We can
also imagine a follow-up to the life of
the wall fragment caught by the lens,
chosen by the eye of the artist and
which is on the point of becoming, right
before our eyes, a piece of art. Painting
references arise, turning the covering into
a painting. From time to time, the story
of monochrome shows on the surface
but it is the story of abstraction, gestural
or not, which dominates. To better fit
the background, the covering takes on
a simple shape. Beautiful rectangles
stand out on the walls or tend to merge
into them. The bricklaying provides the
painter with guidelines to help him out.
The use of the roller, a geometrization
tool as well as a quick means to cover
up a large surface, encourages the use of
solid areas."

Denys Riout

Cover up, 2009-2011
(58 photographs),
2'54" Dimensions variable

Photographic documentation of
graffiti covered with paint by differ-
ent authority.