

JESUS ALBERTO BENITEZ

Jesus Alberto BENITEZ

Born in 1978 in Valencia, Venezuela. Lives and works in Lyon, France
www.jesusalbertobenitez.com

Individual exhibitions :

Caroline Pagès Gallery, Lisbon, 2013
Centre d'Arts Plastiques, Saint-Fons, 2013
The center is not a point, Frank Elbaz Gallery, Paris, 2012
Paper on the desk, Le Bleu du Ciel, Lyon, 2007

Group exhibitions :

La plupart du temps, Most of the time, curated by Martial Delfacieu, La Tôlerie, Clermont-Ferrand, 2013
Never the same twice, Orange Rouge, le 6B, Saint-Denis, 2012
Les Prairies, Ateliers de Rennes, Contemporary Art Biennial, curated by Anne Bonnin, Rennes, 2012
Codex, curated by Pierre Leguillon, LiveInYourHead, Geneva, 2011
Jeune Création, le 104, Paris, 2011
2000-2010, ESA Rueil-Malmaison, 2011
Years of dust covering up years of yellow, curated by Gyan Panchal, Frank Elbaz Gallery, Paris, 2011
Sommerrundgang, Kunstakademie, Düsseldorf, 2010
European Month of Photography, Bratislava, 2009
Exposition de Noël, National Contemporary Art Center - Le Magasin, Grenoble, 2008
Young Creation Panorama, Bourges Biennale, 2008
Identities, Septembre de la Photographie, Lyon, 2008
Anonymous drawings, 4 Berliner Kunstsalon, Berlin, 2007
Poetry, the image and the sound, La Poésie Nuit, Chantier Public, Lyon, 2007
City Grammar, GoetheInstitut, Lyon, 2006
International Photography Biennale, Alejandro Otero Museum, Caracas, 2006
P.I.O.U., Château de la Petite Malmaison, Rueil-Malmaison, 2005
Bredi-Bredà, Le Plateau - experimental space, Paris, 2005

Curatorship :

The divisions of volume, La permanence, Clermont-Ferrand, 2012
Lengthily accumulated variance, La permanence, Clermont-Ferrand, 2011

Residencies / Projects :

Incomplete objects, à project by Aurélien Mole, exhibition *Sir Thomas Trope*, Villa du Parc, Annemasse, 2012
Artists in residency, Clermont-Ferrand, 2011-2012
Permanent, Orange Rouge, Bobigny, 2011-2012
Postproduction residency, Centre Photographique d'Ile-de-France, Pontault-Combault, 2010

Publications :

La belle revue, Clermont-Ferrand, 2013
Oscillations, magazine, Paris, 2012
The new collectors book, New York, 2012
Codex at LiveInYourHead, by Estelle Nabeyrat, Kaleidoscope, Milan, 2011
Jeune Création, catalogue, Paris, 2011
2000-2010, ESA de Rueil-Malmaison, catalogue, 2011
Month of Photography, catalogue, Bratislava, 2009
Identities, Lyon Septembre de la Photographie, catalogue, 2008
Le & Ly, Grammaire de la Ville, Catalogue, HGB Leipzig & ENBA Lyon, 2007
Kings, poster edition n°13, ENSBA Lyon, 2006

Education :

MFA, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts de Lyon, with honours, 2007
Ecole Supérieure d'Arts de Rueil-Malmaison, DNAP, 2005
Ateneo de Valencia, Venezuela, 1999-2000
Art Center South Florida, Miami Beach, 1998

I work in a space in which almost everything is likely to become a drawing.

The bidimensional nature of images is confronted to the physical and concrete aspect of a printed sheet of paper. The drawing is the result of an interaction of various tools, as if it were a recording of ephemeral gestures over a surface. The empty sheet of paper is a space that can be shaped by a mark, a fold, a dot. Each image is built through the connection of gestures with concrete space. With a camera in hand, I move in a place that is real, and the space in front of me has the potential to become a tool for an image. The short moment of a shot has a duration that extends by the longer, so called fixed temporality of an image. A photograph or a drawing are objects in their own right. They are mostly made out immaterial things, but they are also physical elements that integrate our four dimensional space-time.

With the wall, images become installation objects. The interaction with a place furthers the spatial questioning that holds into each image. The apparently empty area around each image is invariably filled by real space. The ephemeral aspect of an installation gets confronted with the apparent permanence of prints and drawings.

Images follow the spiral that extends and contracts itself through the interferences between fact and representation.

Jesus Alberto Benitez

Everything that is no small thing

The first time I saw Jesus Alberto Benítez's work was on a studio visit during his production residency in 2010, at the CPIF (Pontault-Combault). He had laid out drawings and photographs on several tables, and you could look at them from all sides. There was no causal link between such and such a photograph and such and such a drawing. When questioned, the artist remained guarded, refusing any overly direct connections. So that disconcerting proximity between two distinct praxes was developed like a complex and enigmatic tissue of liaisons—with which painting is now associated.

Oblique forms, diagonals, and triangular shadowy zones all surged up here and there. In the photographs, the lines of the architecture duplicated by lines of shadow increased the number of planes. The drawing was outlined in the image, while abstract forms coming from the photographs made their appearance in the drawings.

It had to be noted, however, that the two media differed in both content and treatment. On the one hand, the images included various cut-outs and folds, framed by unequal margins. On the other, the drawings were more instinctive and direct, a few irregular lines made with a perceptible stroke. But obtained using what rule, what procedure? Randomness alone did not seem to be the answer, so right did the placing seem. In fact the reduction of colour and line to the essence denotes a choice about the placing, like, for example, the 2011 drawing *Sans titre / Untitled*, with a single vertical green line, but with one end separated, suggested a slight assumed accident. We should not overlook another sort of line obtained by folding, a line obtained without any tool, responsible for the input of a third dimension to the sheet of paper, which is nothing other than a very flat object. The formal requirement is all the more disturbing: one easily imagines the precision necessary to inflict a fold on a sheet of paper where the line has already been decided, or vice versa. Lastly, the choice of different sorts of paper, here rough, there smoother, with different shades of colour, suggested that the material was significant.

It is in fact this contained drawing, with its rare and precise gestures, which lends an element of disjunction to all Jesus Alberto Benítez's propositions. It upsets the overspill of the photographs. Even if these latter inspire a sensation of void, probably through the absence of bodies and through truncated views of work spaces. The cut-out and the unequal placing on the paper throw the whole thing off-balance. It would not be out of place to talk about image gravity. *Sans titre / Untitled* (2010, a scanned folded photograph printed on poster paper, is how the work's notice describes it, is an exterior image with a staircase, folded several times over, suggesting different types of gravity. One being retinal, a matter of balance, then that of the paper itself, raised, separated from the wall or table where it is installed.

So it is hard to precisely define the object of these images, even if they conjure up studio work (they come from different environments, from the porcelain factory to the musical rehearsal studio) and urban nooks. A tea-towel, cut-out planks, a slope between two buildings, all first and foremost denote the content of an eye coming to rest on the side of the central nucleus of human activity and the walls with which it is surrounded. Whence the can and the aerosol in *Queens* (2007-2010), put there by a hand too busy to then get rid of them. The image treatment, for its part, evokes the document by way of a rhetoric involving margin and printing, which is tantamount to questioning the manner of materializing the image.

Like the drawings, the images are the object of a quest for purification which lends visibility to the choice of elements bringing into existence a moment in time, to which are given a space and a matter. It remains to be said that the actual driving force of the drawings and photographs is the right placing of the things, from the line to the fold, like when you put something on a table or against a wall. Without any aesthetic quest, these residual gestures are the outcome of circumstances and conditionings which have given rise to such tiny and banal micro-situations that we scarcely notice them. But this is where a French expression springs to mind: when it is a question of underscoring the importance of a fact or action which might otherwise go unnoticed, we often resort to the euphemism "ce n'est pas rien", (loosely translated as "it's no small thing" or "it's no mean feat"). It cannot really be translated, as such. In Benítez's language, Spanish, and in mine, Portuguese, this would literally be like saying "it's nothing". It is the breakdown of the negative adverb into two words, "ne" and "pas", which probably permits the euphemism and underpins a line of thought, by the same token,

involving the “next to nothing”. This cut-out of the next-to-nothing which Jesus Alberto Benítez makes is in reality a rigorous research into elements which make something exist. He is fascinated by theories of origins, like that of the proto-planet Theia which allegedly made the earth explode and thus gave birth to the moon. He functions from chance to chance to form a cosmogony. But why, then, look for the ways things exist in their poorest and most neglected crannies? An ethic takes shape here, one involving siding with everything that is no small thing, like a way of questioning man’s place in the totality of the world. One does not practice purification for nothing.

The fact remains that the artist’s ambitions are not those of the scientist who reproduces gigantic phenomena on a small scale. Photography may be a way of making the phenomenon exist in the present, but it is also creation, a tension between present and future. The manipulations to which Jesus Alberto Benítez subjects it, along with their poor object, are mechanisms of an eye for detail, for what is overlooked, and omitted. They are the medium of an attention paid to forms in shadow, but engendering the multiplication of swathes of unsuspected realities, by artistic creation. Whence the recourse to the source, the studio, with its machines and its tools.

These interplays between void and solid recur at the centre of his images and drawings, as well as his paintings. As nothing less than exercises in partial coverings, the paintings on plyboard display as many planes of painting as gestures of drawing or remains of paint or adhesive tapes. Like the flipside of the decor, they can be looked at in profile, displaying very controlled runs. The plyboard is “poor”, to be sure, but it is new and clean. The gestures seem random, but situate objects (withdrawn after the fact) placed haphazardly. A game, reduced to its elements, the line, the spray mark and the framing, refers to another much more metaphysical game, that of chance and creation. Like a piece of music focusing essentially on noise, silence and atonality, Jesus Alberto Benítez’s oeuvre is focused on line, void and de-hierarchization of the gaze. In a word, an oeuvre encompassing elements that are culturally excluded from creation (but precisely where one can better question it)—everything that is no small thing.

Text by Joana Neves

Translated by Simon Pleasance



Timée, 2011, photographie, impression jet d'encre, 122 x 100 cm

Timaeus, 2011, photograph, inkjet print, 42 x 39 inches



Sans titre, 2012, acrylique et encre sur bois, 33 x 49 cm

Untitled, 2012, acrylic and ink on wood, 13 x 19 inches



Sans titre, 2012, acrylique et encre sur bois, 40 x 62 cm

Untitled, 2012, acrylic and ink on wood, 15 x 24 inches



Sans titre, 2012, acrylique et encre sur bois, 55 x 115 cm

Untitled, 2012, acrylic and ink on wood, 21 x 45 inches



Sans titre, 2012, acrylique sur bois, 61 x 101 cm

Untitled, 2012, acrylic on wood, 24 x 40 inches



Sans titre, 2012, acrylique et encre sur papier photosensible, 45 x 55 cm

Untitled, 2012, acrylic and ink on photosensitive paper, 17 x 21 inches



Sans titre, 2012, papier et adhésif, 150 x 150 cm approx, éphémère

Untitled, 2012, paper and adhesif tape, 59 x 59 inches approx, ephemeral



Sans titre, 2012, papier, encre et adhésif, 50 x 60 cm approx, éphémère

Untitled, 2012, paper, ink and adhesif tape, 20 x 23 inches approx, ephemeral



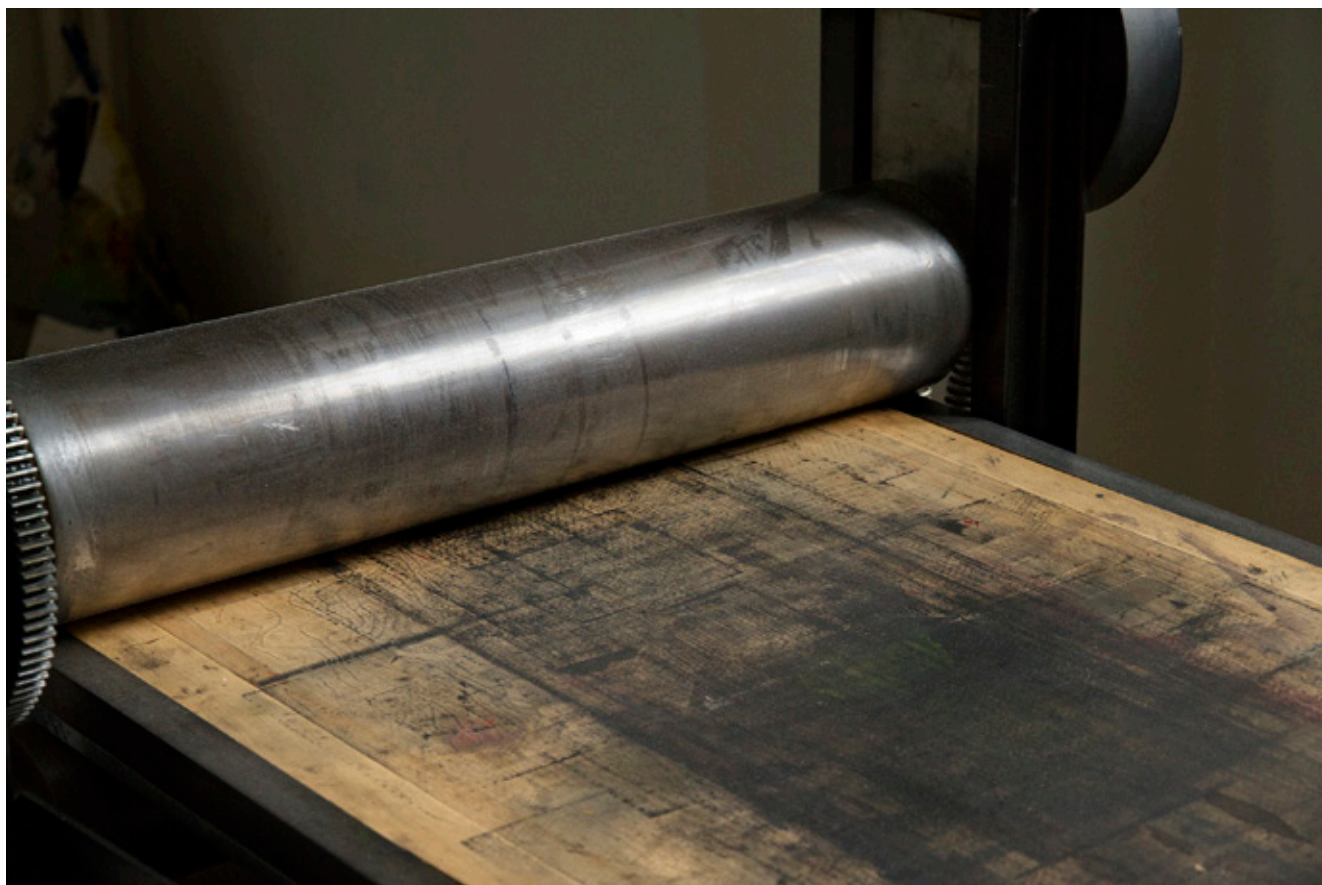
Sans titre, 2011, acrylique et encre sur bois, 30 x 40 cm

Untitled, 2011, acrylic and ink on wood, 12 x 16 inches



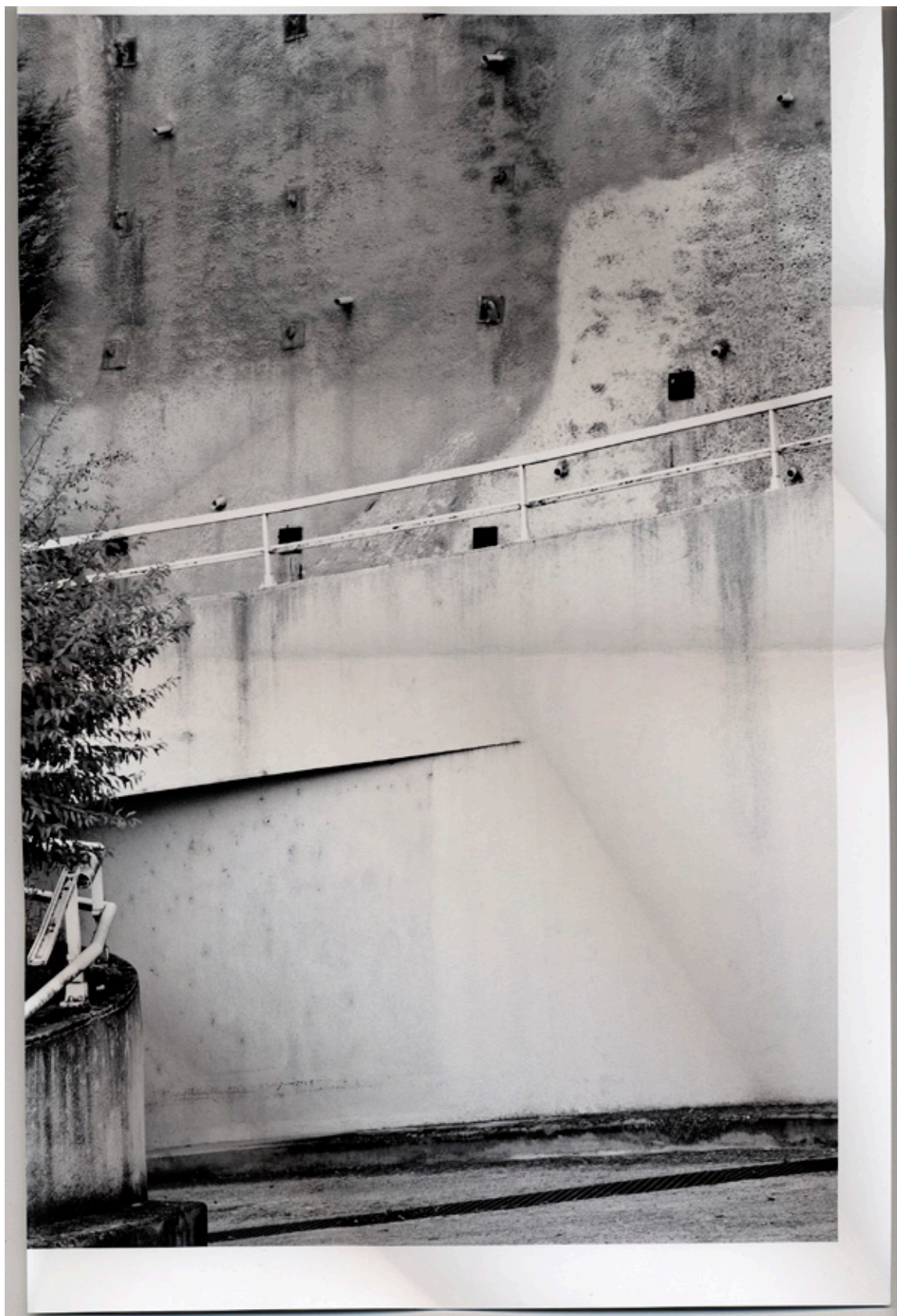
Sans titre, 2011, acrylique et encre sur bois, 30 x 40 cm

Untitled, 2011, acrylic and ink on wood, 12 x 16 inches



Latence, 2011, photographie, impression jet d'encre, 127 x 69 cm

Latency, 2011, photograph, inkjet print, 42 x 26 inches



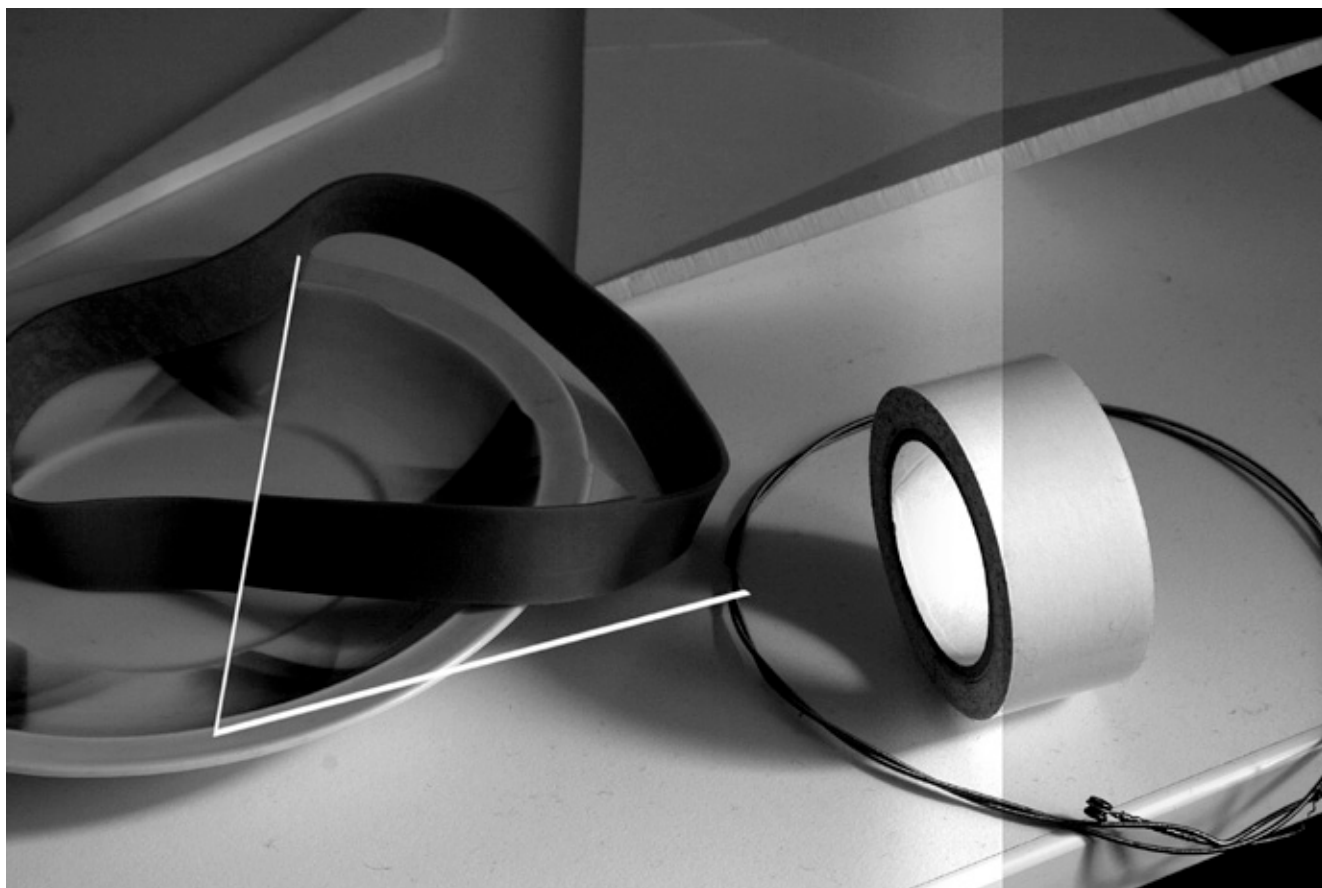
Sans titre, 2010, photographie pliée, scannée, impression jet d'encre sur papier awagami, 110 x 165 cm

Untitled, 2010, folded and scanned photograph, inkjet print on awagami paper, 32 x 47 inches



Table à dessin, 2009, photographie, impression jet d'encre, 78 x 52 cm

Drawing desk, 2009, photograph, inkjet print, 30 x 20 inches



Tres-Version 2, 2007-2010, photographie, impression jet d'encre, 85 x 56 cm

Tres-Version 2, 2007-2010, photograph, inkjet print, 33 x 21 inches



Queens, 2007-2010, photographie, impression jet d'encre, 64 x 95 cm

Queens, 2007-2010, photograph, inkjet print, 20 x 31 inches



Le bureau, 2006-2007, photographie, impression jet d'encre, 56 x 86 cm

The desk, 2006-2007, photograph, inkjet print, 35 x 24 inches



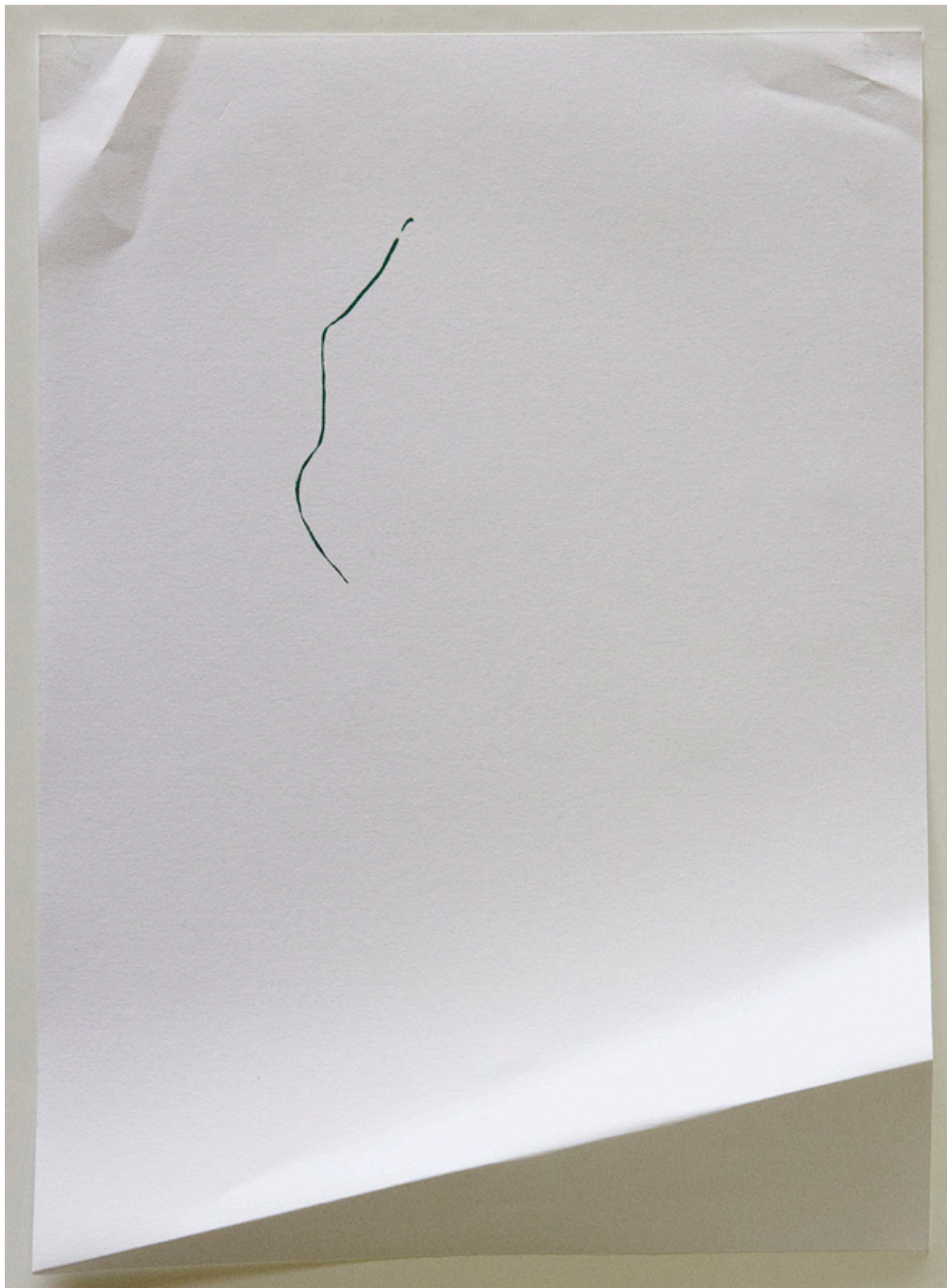
Sans titre, 2007-2011, acrylique et adhésif sur bois, 50 x 60 cm

Untitled, 2007-2011, acrylic and adhesive tape on wood, 20 x 23 inches



Sans titre, 2011, encre sur bâche ondulée, 58 x 95 cm

Untitled, 2011, ink on tarpaulin, 23 x 37 inches



Sans titre, 2011, encre et pli sur papier, 21 x 29 cm

Untitled, 2011, ink and fold on paper, 8 x 11 inches



Sans titre, 2010, photographie, impression jet d'encre, 157 x 105 cm

Sans titre, 2010, photographie, impression jet d'encre, 136 x 90 cm

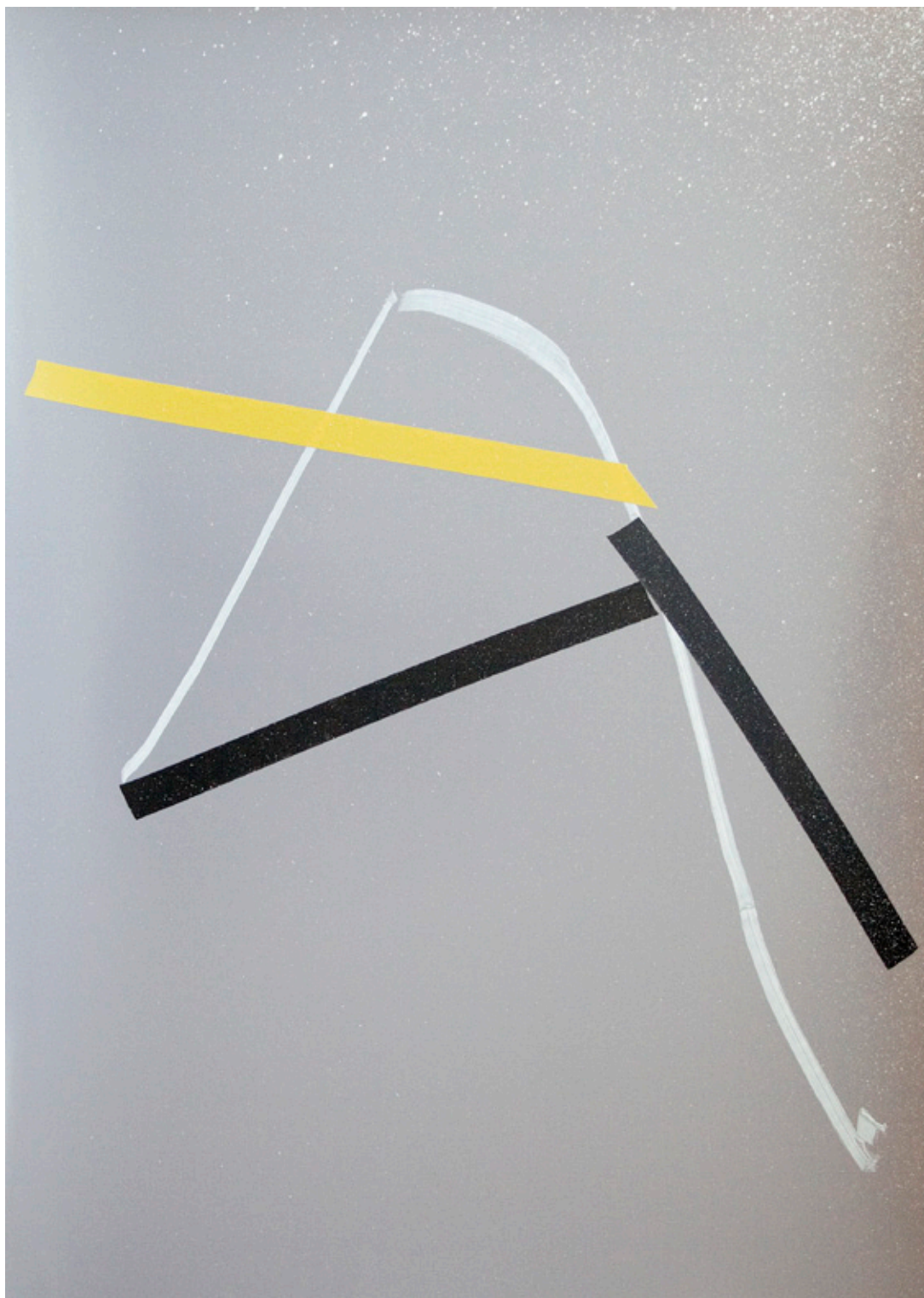
Untitled, 2010, photograph, inkjet print, 59 x 39 inches

Untitled, 2010, photograph, inkjet print, 53 x 35 inches



Pont, 2009, photographie, impression jet d'encre, 126 x 84 cm

Bridge, 2009, photograph, inkjet print, 47 x 31 inches



Sans titre, 2009, acrylique et ruban adhésif sur papier photosensible, 41 x 61 cm

Untitled, 2009, ink, acrylic and adhesif tape on photosensitive paper, 17 x 24 inches



Sans titre, 2009, acrylique et ruban adhésif sur papier photosensible, 41 x 61 cm

Untitled, 2009, ink, acrylic and adhesif tape on photosensitive paper, 17 x 24 inches



Sans titre, 2009, acrylique et ruban adhésif sur papier photosensible, 43 x 61 cm

Untitled, 2009, acrylic, ink and adhesif tape on photosensitive paper, 18 x 24 inches



Planche, 2007, photographie, impression jet d'encre, dimensions variables

Board, 2007, photograph, inkjet print, dimensions variable