

JESUS ALBERTO BENITEZ

Jesus Alberto BENITEZ

Born in 1978 in Valencia, Venezuela. Lives and works in Lyon, France
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Individual exhibitions :

Caroline Pagès Gallery, Lisbon, 2013
Time is the tiger, Le CAP, Saint-Fons, 2013
The center is not a point, Frank Elbaz Gallery, Paris, 2012
Paper on the desk, Le Bleu du Ciel - Le bureau, Lyon, 2007

Group exhibitions :

Most of the time, La Tôlerie, Clermont-Ferrand, 2013
ARCO Art Fair, Galerie Caroline Pagès, Madrid, 2013
Sir Thomas Trope, Villa du Parc, Annemasse, 2012
FIAC, Grand Palais, Frank Elbaz Gallery, Paris, 2012
Never the same twice, Orange Rouge project, Le 6B, Saint-Denis, 2012
The Prairies, Les Ateliers de Rennes, Contemporary Art Biennial, Rennes, 2012
Codex, LiveInYourHead, Geneva, 2011
Jeune création, Le 104, Paris, 2011
2000-2010, Ecole Supérieure d'Arts de Rueil-Malmaison, 2011
Years of dust covering up years of yellow, 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
Panorama de la jeune création, Bourges Biennale, 2008
Identities, Photography September, Lyon, 2008
Anonymous drawings - selection, 4 Berliner Kunstsalon, Berlin, 2007
Poetry, the image and the sound, La poésie nuit, Chantier Public, Lyon, 2007
City Grammar, Goethe Institut, Lyon, 2006
International Photography Biennial, Alejandro Otero Museum, Caracas, 2006
P.I.O.U., Château de la Petite Malmaison, Rueil-Malmaison, 2005
Bredi-Bredà, Le Plateau - expérimental space, Paris, 2005

Curatorship :

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

Residencies :

Artists in Residency, Clermont-Ferrand, 2011-2012
Postproduction studio, Centre Photographique d'Ile-de-France, Pontault-Combault, 2010

Publications :

Les Prairies, Rennes Biennial, catalogue, 2013
La Belle Revue, Clermont-Ferrand, 2013
Wandering through unusual prairies, Zéro Deux magazine, n°64, Paris, 2012
Oscillations, magazine, Paris, 2012
The New Collectors Book, catalogue, New York, 2012
Codex at LiveInYourHead, Kaleidoscope blog, Milan, 2011
Jeune Création, catalogue, Paris, 2011
2000-2010, ESA de Rueil-Malmaison, catalogue, 2011
Month of Photography, catalogue, Bratislava, 2009
Mission Jeunes Artistes, Toulouse, 2009
Identities, Photography September, catalogue, 2008
Bristampart - understanding contemporary art, interview, Brume radio, Lyon, 2007 and 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
Arts BA, Ecole Supérieure d'Arts de Rueil-Malmaison, 2005
Contemporary Art, 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



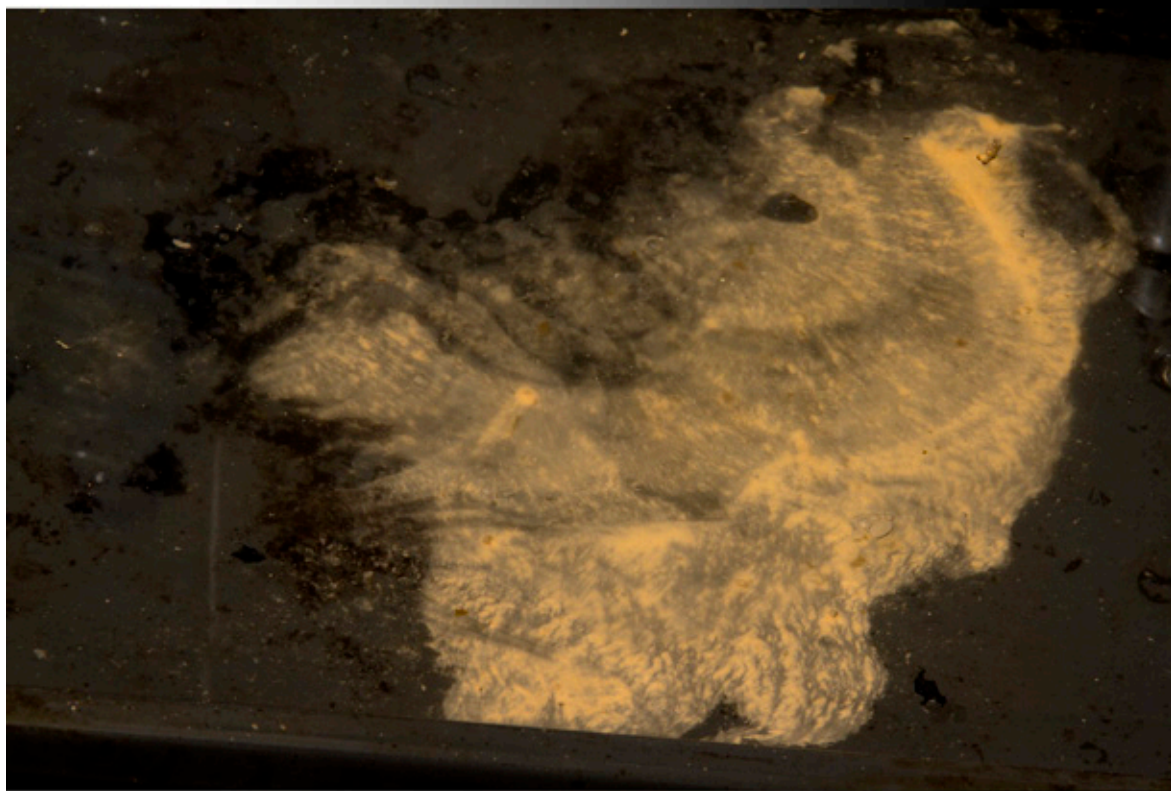
Sans titre, 2013, alcool et encre sur acier, 60 x 100 cm

Untitled, 2013, alcohol and ink on steel, 60 x 100 cm



Sans titre, 2013, acrylique et encre sur bois, 78 x 112 cm

Untitled, 2013, acrylic and ink on wood, 78 x 112 cm



Sans titre, 2012, impression jet d'encre, 88 x 128 cm

Untitled, 2012, inkjet print, 88 x 128 cm



Sans titre, 2013, acrylique, aérosol et encre sur bois, 60 x 80 cm

Untitled, 2013, acrylic, spray paint and ink on wood, 60 x 80 cm



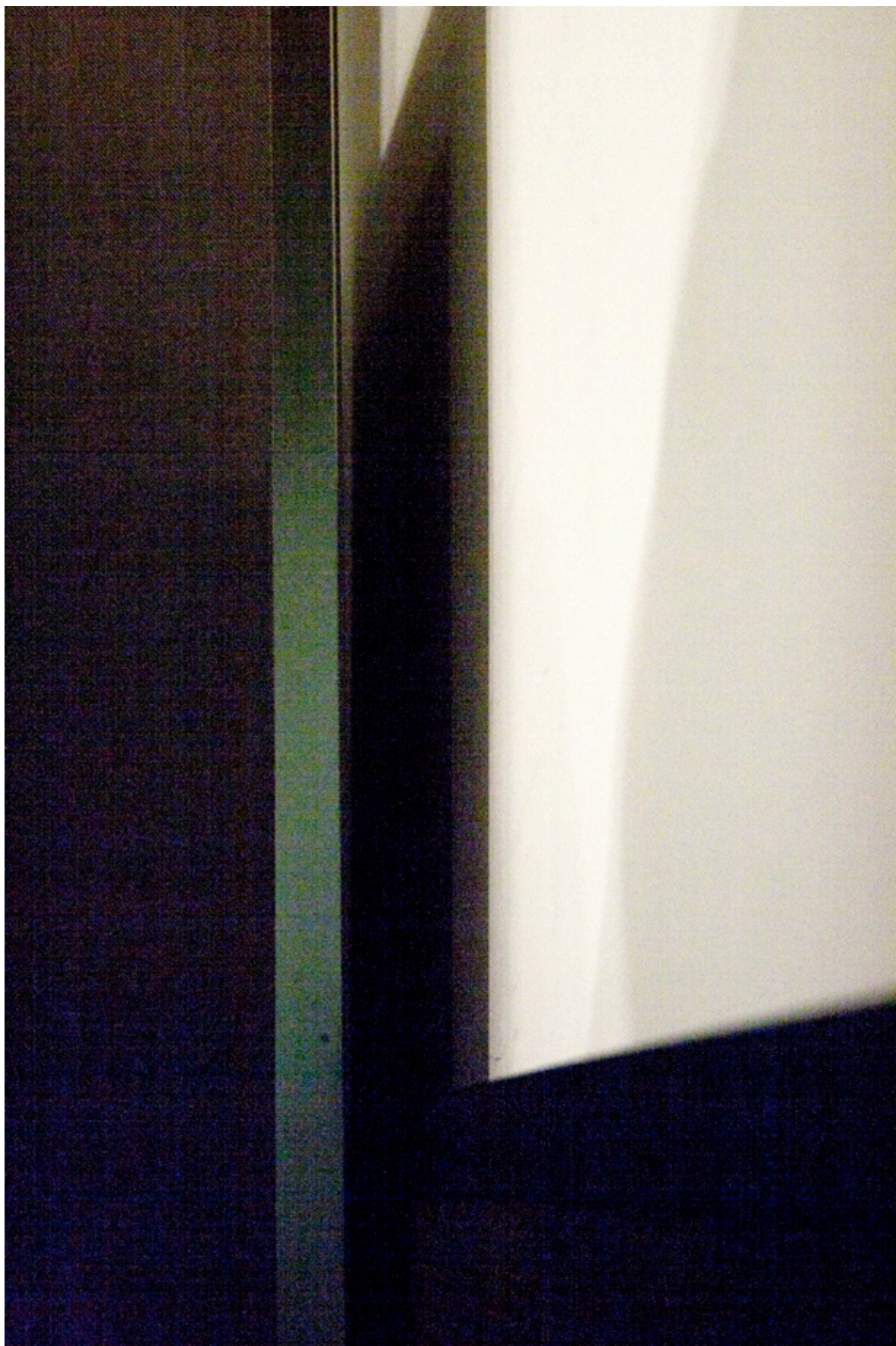
Sans titre, 2012, acrylique, encre, papier et bois, 27 x 39 cm

Untitled, 2012, acrylic, ink, paper and wood, 27 x 39 cm



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

Untitled, 2012, ink, pencil and glue on wood, 33 x 49 cm



Sans titre, 2012, photographie, impression jet d'encre, 104 x 163 cm

Untitled, 2012, photography, inkjet print, 104 x 63 cm



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

Timaeus, 2011, photography, inkjet print, 122 x 100 cm



Sans titre, 2012, acrylique, encre, poussière et sciure sur bois, 41 x 61 cm

Untitled, 2012, acrylic, ink, dust and sawdust on wood, 41 x 61 cm



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

Untitled, 2012, acrylic and ink on wood, 33 x 49 cm



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

Untitled, 2012, acrylic and ink on wood, 40 x 62 cm



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

Untitled, 2012, acrylic and ink on photosensitive paper, 45 x 55 cm, private collection, Rennes



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

Untitled, 2012, acrylic and ink on wood, 55 x 115 cm



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

Untitled, 2012, acrylic on wood, 61 x 101 cm



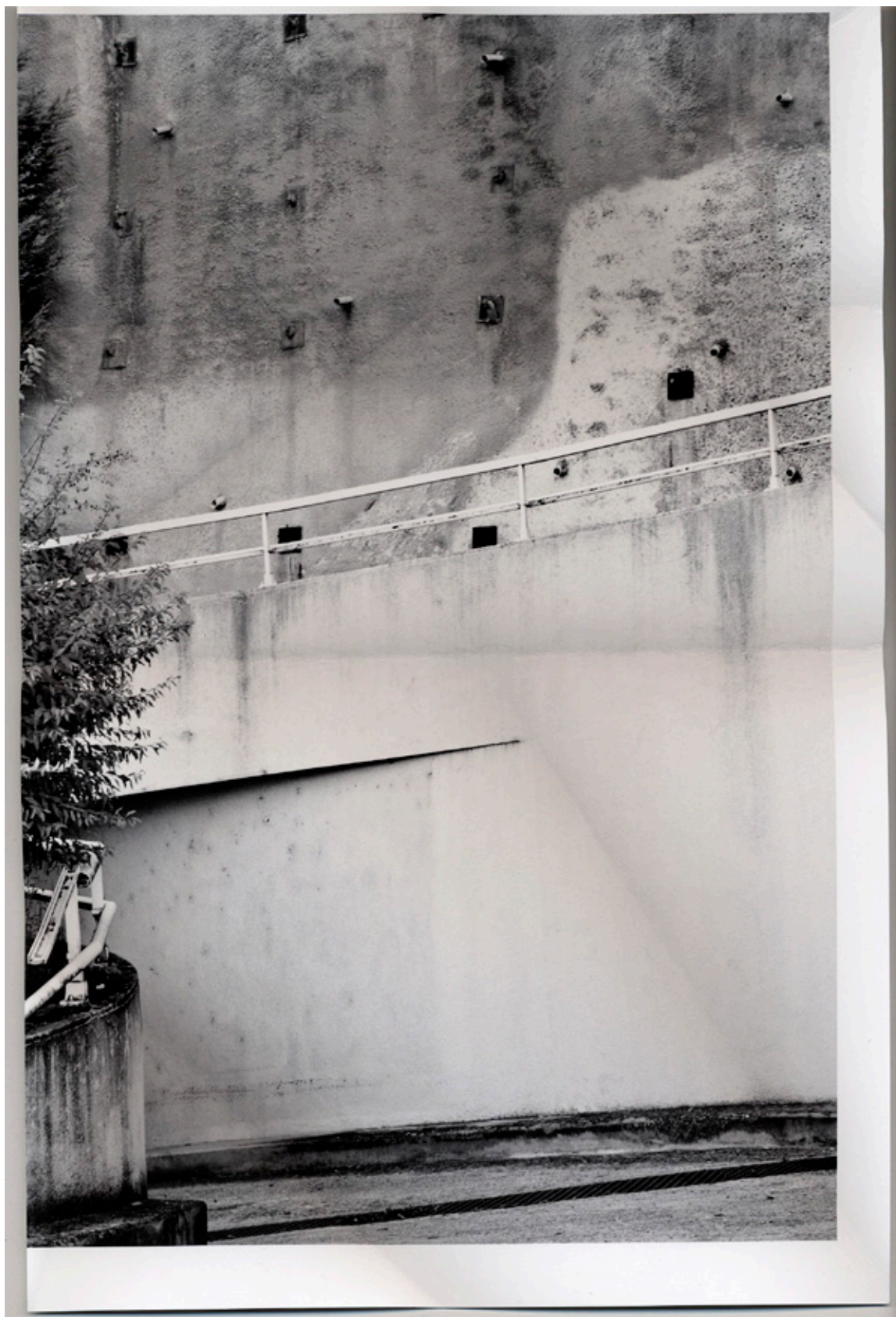
Sans titre, 2012, papier et adhésif, 150 x 150 cm approx, éphémère

Untitled, 2012, paper and tape, 150 x 150 cm approx, ephemeral



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

Untitled, 2012, paper, ink and tape, 50 x 60 cm approx, ephemeral



Sans titre, 2010, photographie pliée, scannée, impression jet d'encre, 110 x 165 cm, collection particulière, Paris
produite avec le soutien du Centre Photographique d'Ile-de-France

Untitled, 2010, folded and scanned photograph, inkjet print, 110 x 165 cm, private collection, Paris



Tres-Version 2, 2007-2010, photographie, impression jet d'encre, 85 x 56 cm, collection particulière, Paris
produite avec le soutien du Centre Photographique d'Ile-de-France

Tres-Version 2, 2007-2010, photography, inkjet print, 85 x 56 cm, private collection, Paris



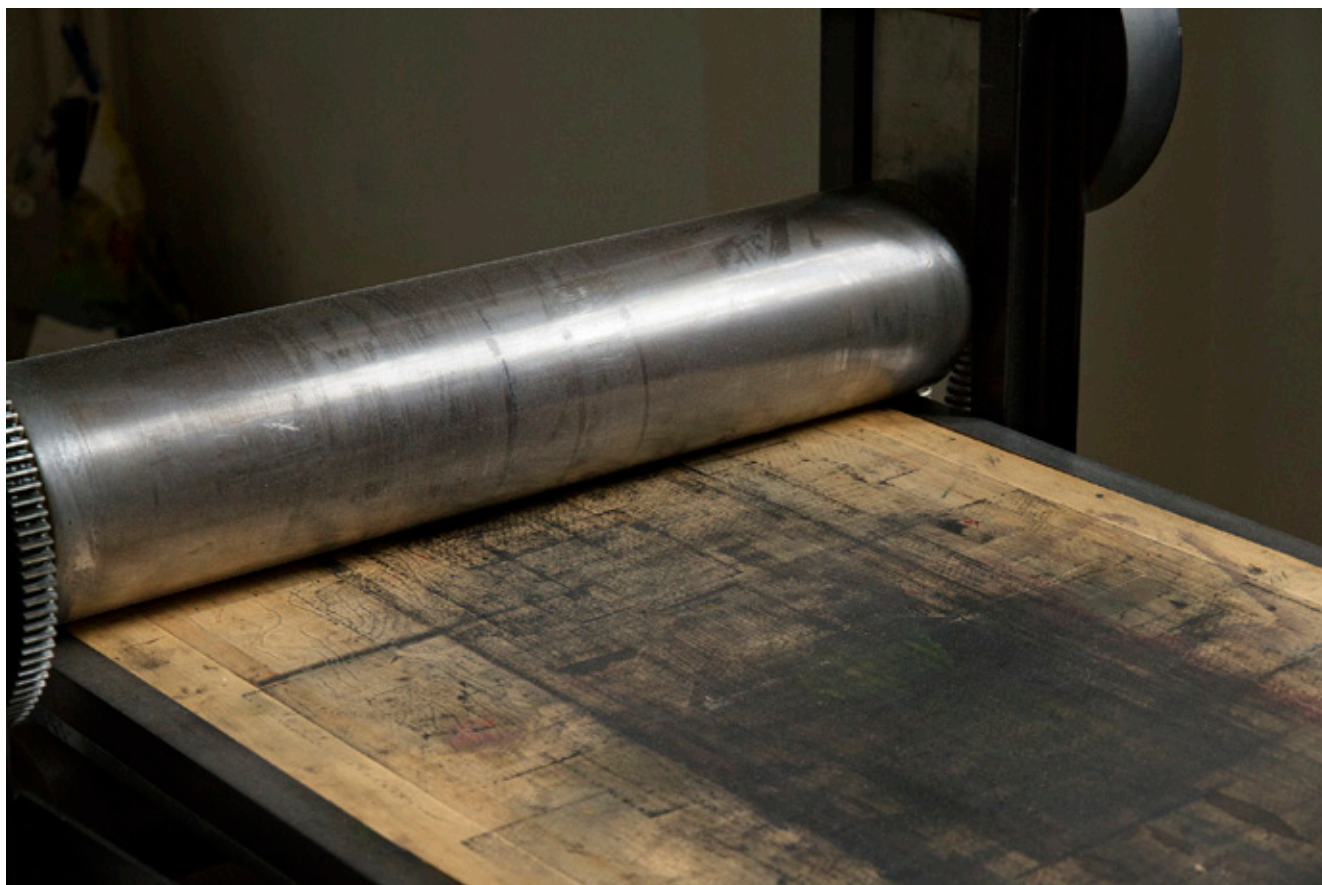
Sans titre, 2011, acrylique et encre sur bois, 30 x 40 cm, collection particulière, Singapour

Untitled, 2011, acrylic and ink on wood, 30 x 40 cm, private collection, Singapour



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

Untitled, 2011, acrylic and ink on wood, 30 x 40 cm, private collection, Singapore



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

Latency, 2011, photography, inkjet print, 127 x 69 cm



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

Queens, 2007-2010, photography, inkjet print, 64 x 95 cm



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

Drawing desk, 2009, photography, inkjet print, 78 x 52 cm



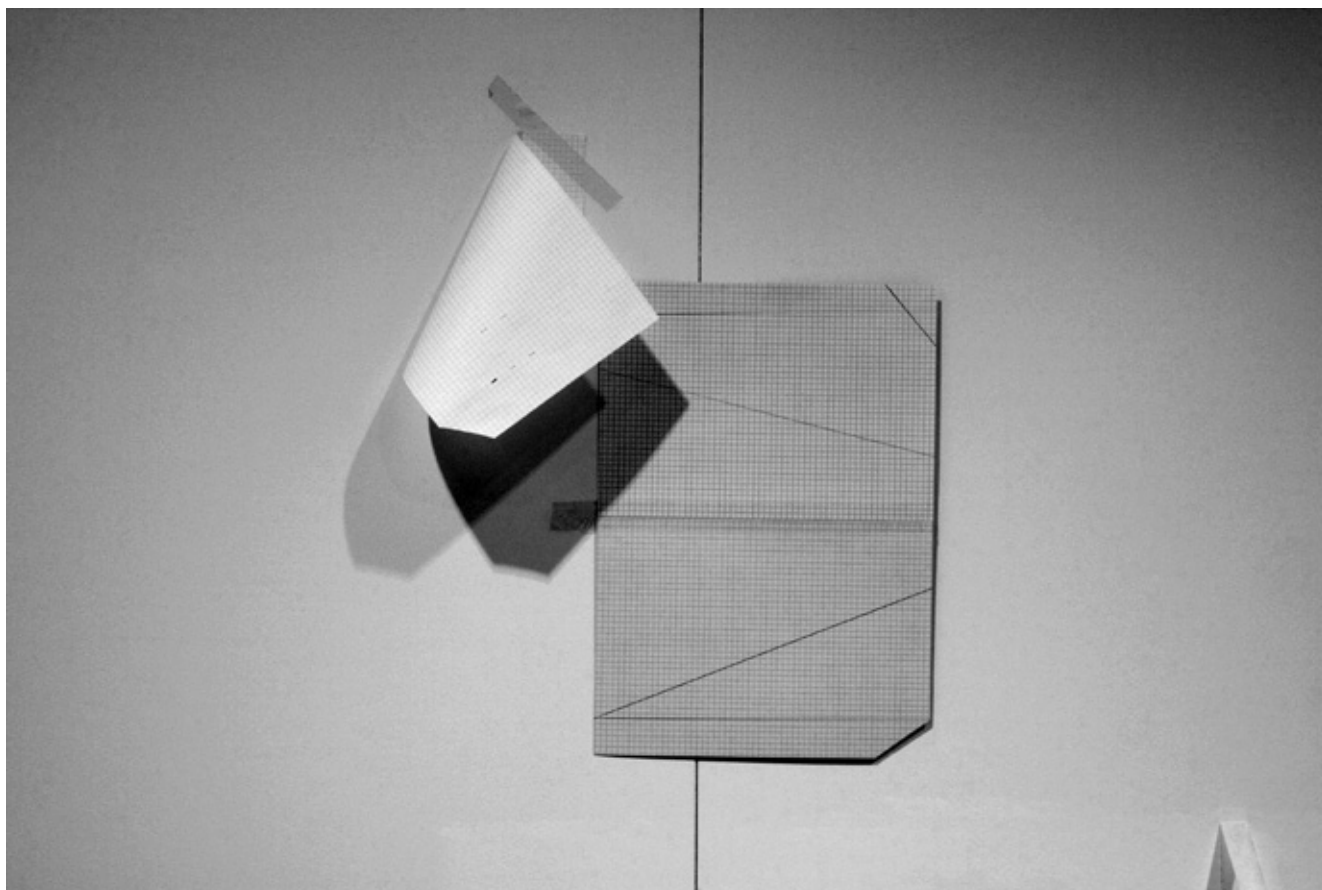
Progression simple, 2009, photographie, impression jet d'encre, 60 x 89 cm

Simple progression, 2009, photography, inkjet print, 60 x 89 cm



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

The desk, 2006-2007, photography, inkjet print, 56 x 86 cm



Sans titre, 2007-2008, photographie d'installation, impression jet d'encre, dimensions variables

Untitled, 2007-2008, photography of installation, inkjet print, dimensions variable



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

Untitled, 2007-2011, acrylic and tape on wood, 50 x 60 cm, private collection, Paris



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

Untitled, 2009, ink, acrylic and tape on photosensitive paper, 41 x 61 cm



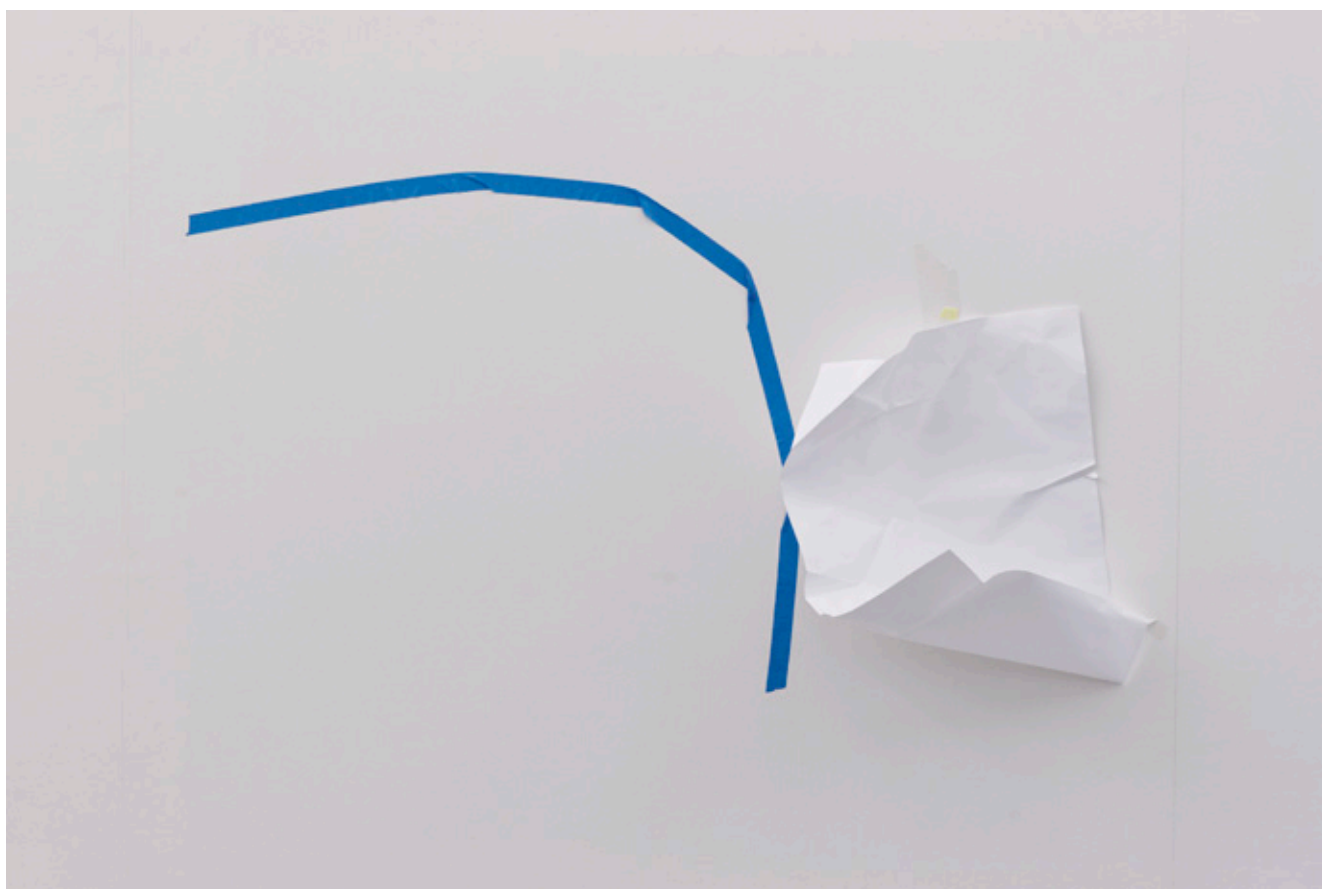
Sans titre, 2009, acrylique et ruban adhésif sur papier photosensible, 43 x 61 cm, collection particulière, Paris

Untitled, 2009, acrylic, ink and tape on photosensitive paper, 43 x 61 cm, private collection, Paris



La plupart du temps, vue d'installation, La Tôlerie, Clermont-Ferrand, 2013

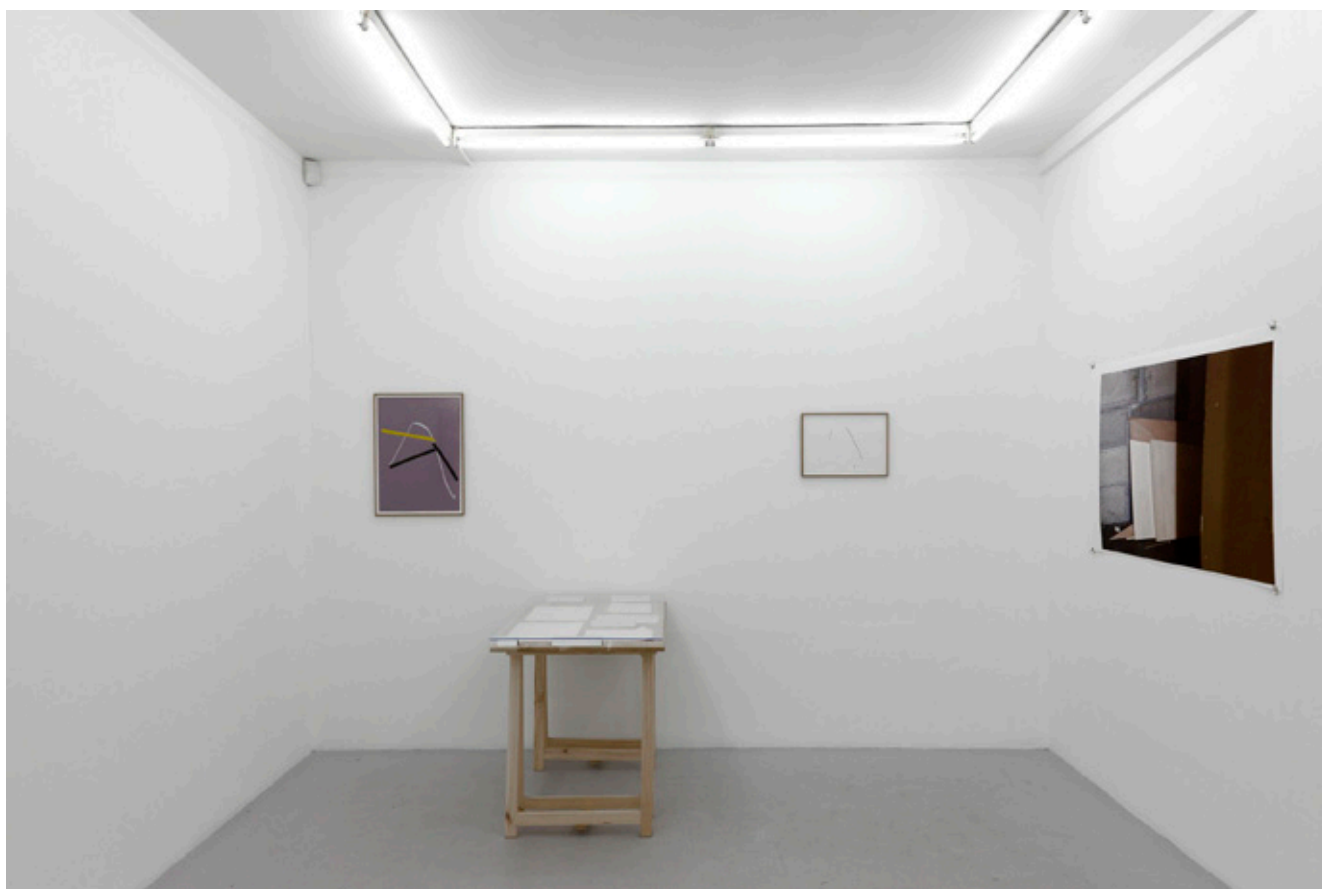
Most of the time, installation view, La Tôlerie, Clermont-Ferrand, 2013



Exhibition views : *Les Prairies*, Rennes Biennial
 New Way Mabilais (top) and FRAC Bretagne (bottom), Rennes, 2012
 photos Aurélien Mole



Exhibition views : *The center is not a point*, galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris 2012
photos Zarko Vijatovic



Exhibition views : *The center is not a point*, galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris 2012
photos Zarko Vijatovic



Exhibition views : *Years of dust covering years of yellow*,
 with Sarah Barker and Mélanie Blaison, galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris 2012
 photos Zarko Vijatovic