

Viktor Timofeev

Select Exhibitions, Works, CV and Press 2017-2023



Viktor Timofeev / viktortimofeev.com / viktor.timofeev@gmail.com / [instagram](#) / [vimeo](#)

Born 1984 Riga, Latvia

2015-2017 MFA, Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam

2002-2008 BFA, Hunter College, New York

Solo Exhibitions

- 2023 [2023](#), Paris Internationale with kim? Contemporary Art Center
- 2021 [DOG](#), Interstate Projects, New York
- 2020 [Game](#), MX Gallery, New York
[God Objects](#), Karlin Studios / Futura, Prague
- 2018 [God Room](#), Alyssa Davis Gallery, New York
- 2017 [Stairway To Melon](#), Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga, Latvia
[Sazarus IV](#), Two Queens, Leicester, UK
[Sweet Guardian](#), Podium, Oslo
- 2016 [Sazarus I](#), Cordova, Vienna
[Porcelain](#), Sydney, Sydney
[S.T.A.T.E.](#), Drawing Room, London
- 2015 [Proxyah 1.1](#), Jupiter Woods, London
- 2014 [Proxyah 1.0](#), Kim? Contemporary Art Center, Riga, Latvia
- 2011 FOURESTS, Riga Art Space, Riga, Latvia (curated by Inga Šteimane)
- 2010 *Monstr0city*, Hannah Barry Gallery, London

Select Group and Two-Person Exhibitions

- 2023 [Tallinn Photomonth](#), Tallinn Art Hall, Tallinn
[Shallow Springs](#), Kohta Kunstalle, Helsinki
[Circadian Gardens](#), eyes never sleep, New York
[Going In...Bye](#), St. Chad's Projects, London
[Feels Like Memplex](#), Karst, Plymouth, UK
- 2022 [Crucible](#), Spencer Brownstone Gallery, New York
[Telephone Conversations](#) (with Jaakko Pallasvujo), Newton, New York
[For The Birds](#), Brooklyn Botanic Garden, New York
- 2021 [Fall River MoCA: Survey](#), Bureau, New York
[Metabolic Rift at Berlin Atonal](#), Berlin Kraftwerk, Berlin (curated by Adriano Rosselli)
[14th Baltic Triennial](#), Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius (curated by Valentinas Klimašauskas and João Laia)
[Post-Digital Intimacy](#), National Gallery Prague (curated by Michal Novotny)
[Spatial Affairs](#), Museum Ludwig, Budapest (curated by Livia Nolasco-Rozsas)
[Chernobyl Papers](#), Chernobyl (organized by New Scenario)
- 2020 [Riga Notebook: Following the lines of Waclaw Szpakowski](#), Museum Sztuki, Lodz (curated by Inga Lāce)
- 2019 [Unexpected Encounters](#), Latvian National Museum of Art, Riga (curated by Latvian Center for Contemporary Art)
[Rite Of Access](#), Stroom Den Haag (curated by left.gallery)
[Portable Landscapes](#), James Gallery at CUNY Graduate Center, New York (curated by LCCA)
[I Had Amnesia Maybe Once or Twice](#), Polansky Gallery, Brno (curated by Kaspars Groševs)
[A Very Small Window](#), Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga, Latvia (curated by Kaspars Groševs)
[Cosmic Existence](#), Den Frie, Copenhagen (curated by LCCA)
[Digital Gothic](#), Centre D'art Contemporain - Synagogue de Delme, France
[Modern Nature](#), Drawing Room, London (curated by Katharine Stout)
[Aminals](#), 427 Gallery, Riga, Latvia (with Alexander Iezzi)
- 2018 [HAPPINESS](#), Cordova, Barcelona (with Jaakko Pallasvujo, TARWUK, Anni Puolakka)
[A Barbarian In Paris](#), Fondation Ricard, Paris (curated by Joachim Hamou, Maija Rudovska and Barbara Sirieix)

- [Victorian Basics and Martian Stories](#), Levy Delval, Brussels (with Martin Kohout)
[Orient: The New East](#), Bunkier Sztuki, Krakow (curated by Michal Novotny)
[Portable Landscapes](#), Latvian National Museum of Art, Riga, Latvia (curated by LCCA)
[Somewhere in Between](#), Bozar, Brussels (curated by Komplot, Brussels)
- 2017 [Orient](#), kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga, Latvia (curated by Michal Novotny)
[White Walkers](#), 427 Gallery, Riga, Latvia
- 2016 [Roy Da Prince](#), Futura, Prague
[Vaporents](#), Voidoid Archive, Glasgow (curated by Dane Sutherland)
- 2015 [Lament Of Ur](#), KARST Projects, Plymouth (with Joey Holder)
- 2014 [A Guide To Making A Genie](#), 427 Gallery, Riga, Latvia

Press / Bibliography / Texts

- 2023 Timofeev, Viktor. [Four Characters: Riga Technoculture Research Unit](#). RTRU.org
Taluma, Merilin and Toots, Annika. [Your Time Is My Time](#). Mousse Publishing
- 2021 Gormley, James. [Palace of Peace and Exocursion: Review](#). Wire Magazine 452, October (PDF)
McLaughlin, Rosanna. [Vitamin D3: New Perspectives in Drawing](#). Phaidon (PDF)
Kay, Jean. [A Remote Drawing Exercise...](#), AQNB, February
- 2020 Davis, Jacquelyn. [Unexpected Encounters: Review](#). After Image
- 2019 Jones, Alex A. [Viktor Timofeev: God Room](#). The Brooklyn Rail, February
Natanzon, Ruthie. [Viktor Timofeev: God Room](#). The Brooklyn Rail, February
Silapētera, Andra. [A Utopia Of The Human Animal World](#). Latvijas Avīze, February
- 2018 Černiauskaite, Neringa. [Stairway to Melon Review](#). Artforum, February (PDF)
- 2017 Emery, Tom. [Sazarus IV Review](#). Art Monthly UK, April (PDF)
- 2015 Fite-Wassilak, Chris. [Proxyah v2 Review](#). Art Papers, May/June (PDF)
- 2011 [Cover](#), The White Review, Issue 1

Interviews

- 2022 Shneyderman, Elizaveta. [Artist Profile](#). Rhizome.org
- 2021 Timofeevs, Sergejs. [A Clear Balance Of The Unknown](#). arterritory.com (RU)
- 2019 Hirša, Santa. [Programing Experiential Mazes](#). Diena
- 2018 Onckule, Zane. [Viktor Timofeev Turns Left](#). EchoGoneWrong.com
Bezpalov, Vitaly and Serkova, Natalya. [Conversation](#). Tzvetnik
Ludovico, Alessandro. [About Physical Capacity](#). Neural Magazine, Winter issue (PDF)
- 2017 Kay, Jean. [Viktor Timofeev : Sazarus IV](#). AQNB
Groševs, Kaspars. [A Heart Made Of Black Potatoes](#). Diena
Caune, Helmut. [A Staircase Is A Rule Followed By Trees](#). arterritory.com

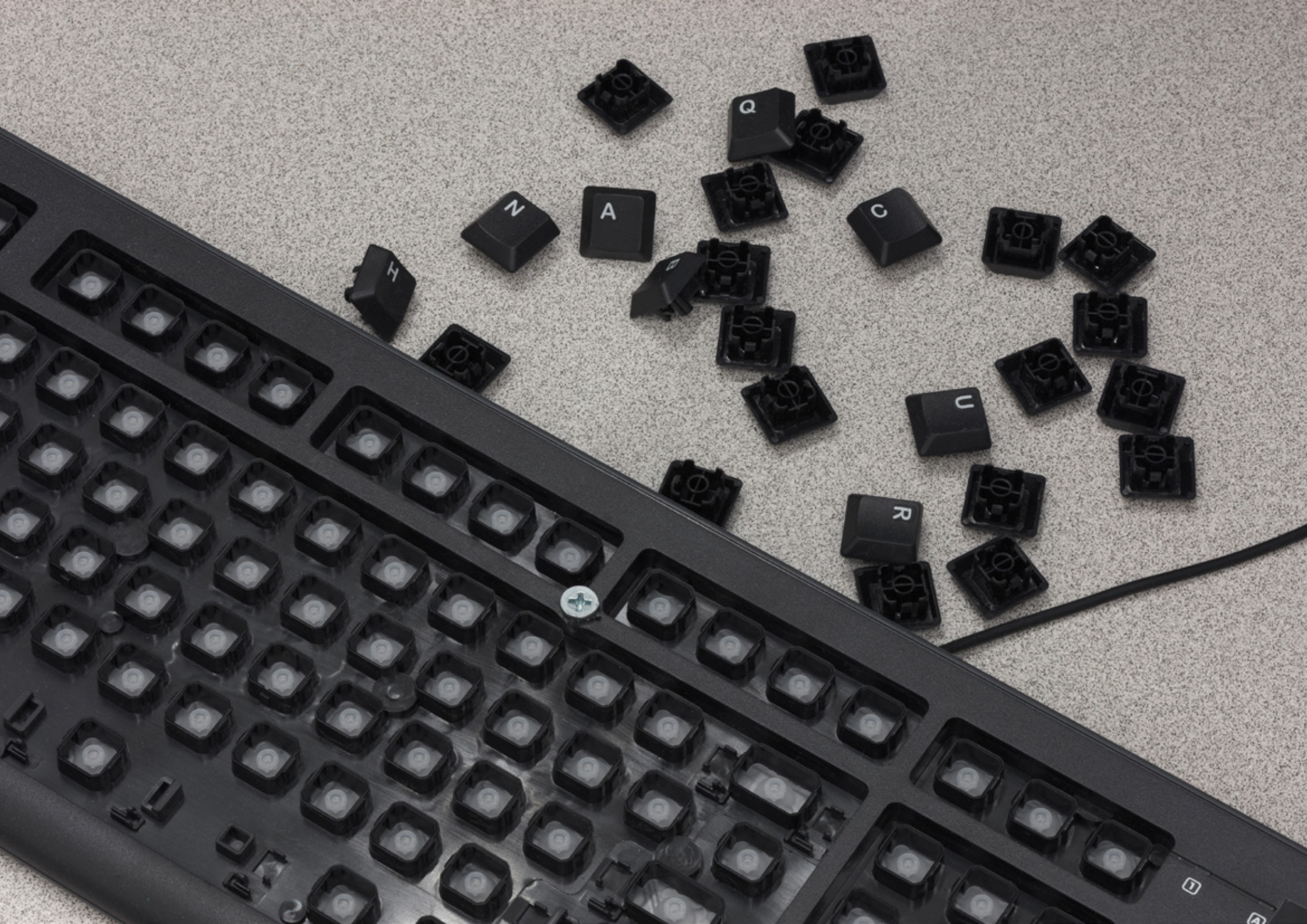
Residencies / Awards

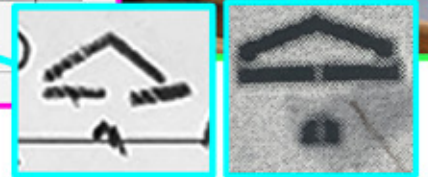
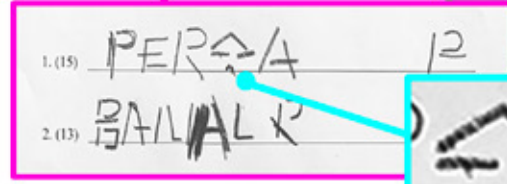
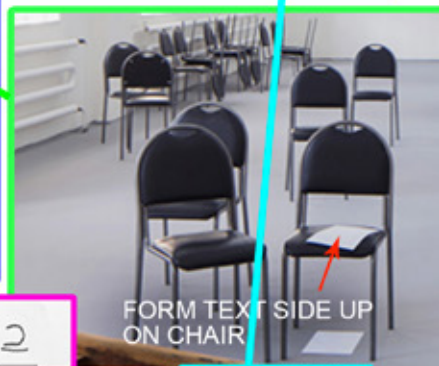
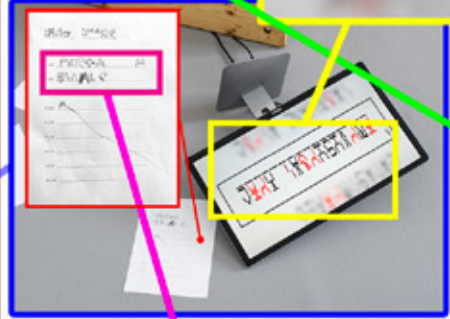
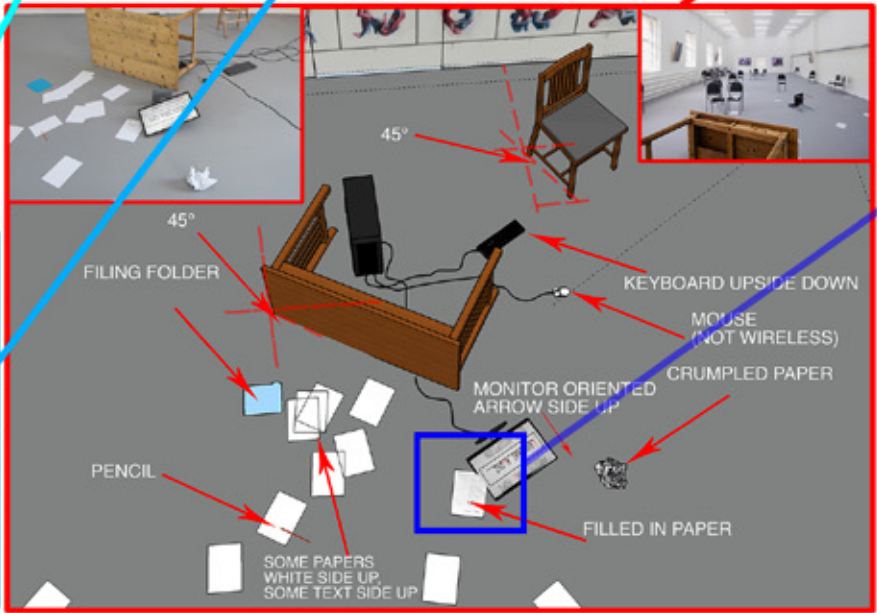
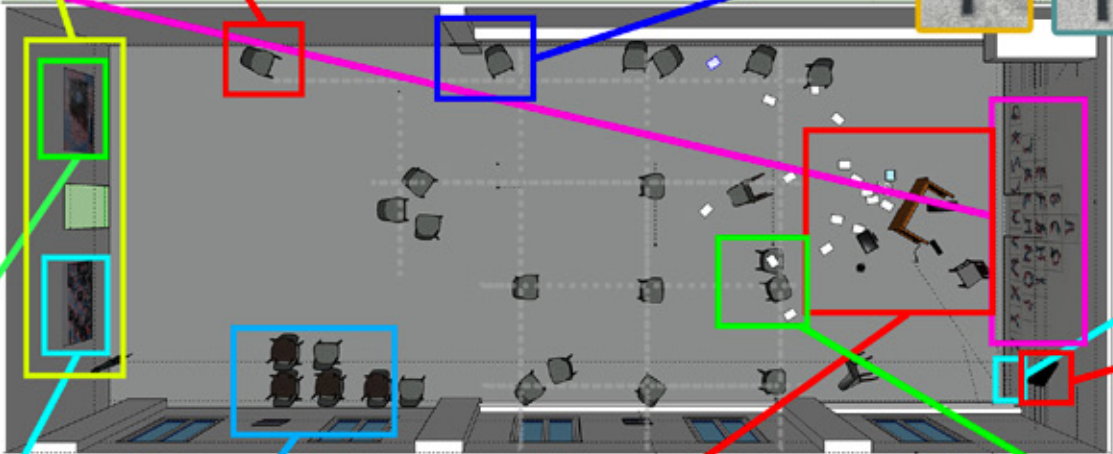
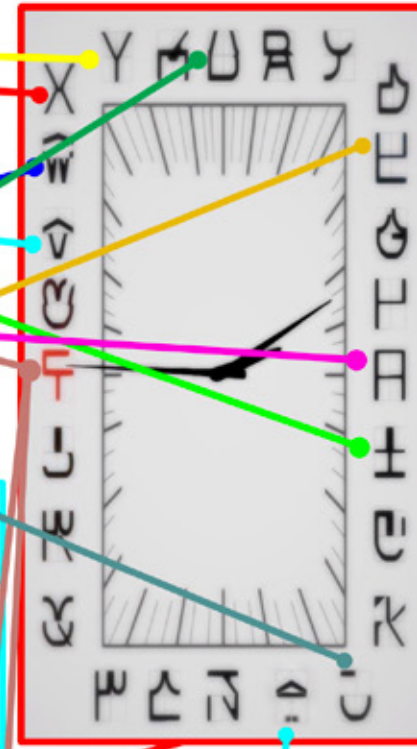
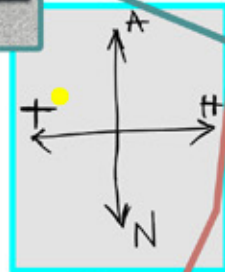
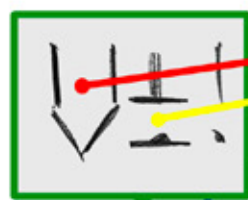
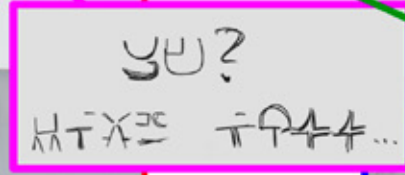
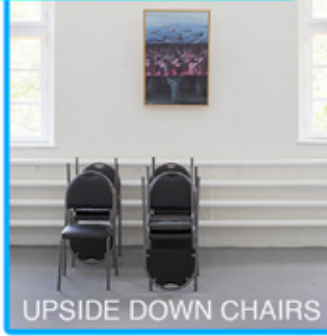
- 2023 Artist Residency, La Niece, Nice
- 2022 Jerome Hill Artist Finalist, Jerome Foundation, New York
- 2015 Artist Residency, Rupert, Vilnius
- 2013 Artist Residency, Mahler & Lewitt Studios, Spoleto
- 2013 Artist Grant, Pollock-Krasner Foundation, New York
- 2012 *Adolf Loos Prize*, Van Den Valentyn Foundation, Cologne

Discography

- 2021 [Exocursion](#), vinyl record, Futura Resistenza, Brussels
- 2020 [Palace Of Peace And Reconciliation](#), web release on OFLUXO
- 2016 [Zolitude \(with Kaspars Groševs\)](#), digital album, Quantum Natives
- 2011 [Palace Of Peace And Reconciliation](#), vinyl record, lobitlandscapes
- 2011 [GIVE HEALTH999](#), vinyl record, lobitlandscapes









Previous pages:

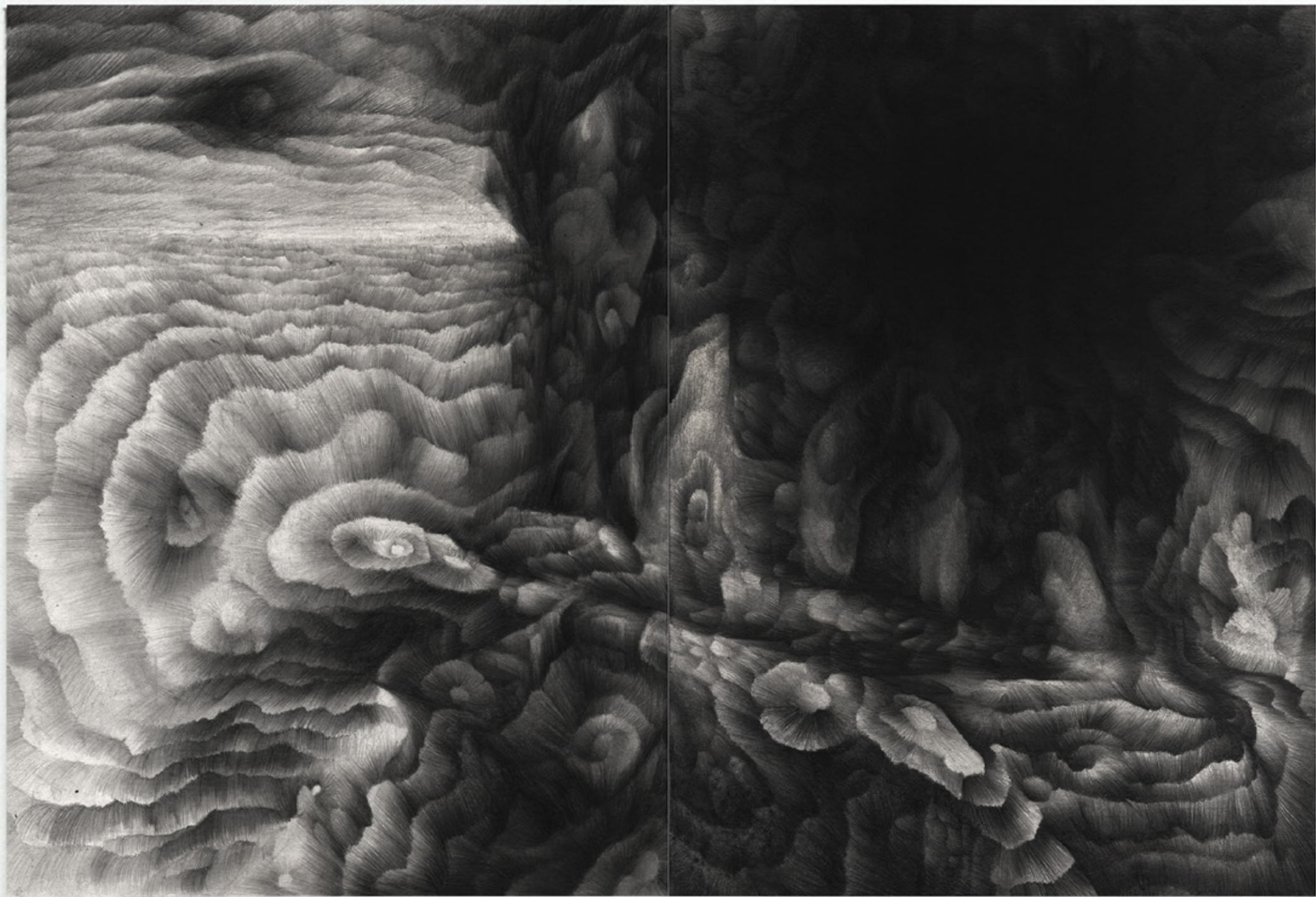
1. *Exact Fantasy* (detail), graphite on paper, part of solo presentation at Paris International with kim?, Contemporary Art Center, Riga, 2023
2. [*Location Of Serenity*](#), group exhibition at DRONE, New York, 2021
2. [*DOG*](#), solo exhibition at Interstate Projects, New York, 2021
3. [*God Objects*](#), solo exhibition at Karlin Studios / Futura, Prague, 2020
4. [*Stairway to Melon*](#), solo exhibition at kim? Contemporary Art Center, Riga, 2017

Select Exhibitions



2023, 2023
solo presentation at Paris Internationale with kim? Contemporary Art Center
graphite on paper, framed, black aluminum profile, red passepartout, museum glass

[further documentation](#)

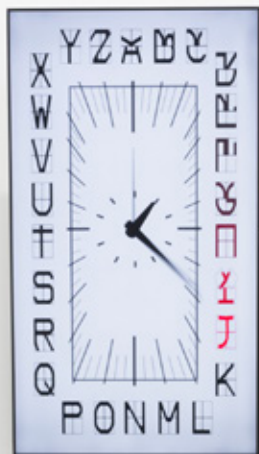


DOG, 2021

solo exhibition at Interstate Projects, New York
installation comprised of mural, three-channel
generative software, modified keyboards, furniture, works on paper.

[further documentation](#)











God Objects, 2020

solo exhibition at Karlin Studios, Prague
oil on canvas paintings, furniture, mural,
two-channel generative software

[further documentation](#)









GAME, 2020

solo exhibition at MX Gallery, New York

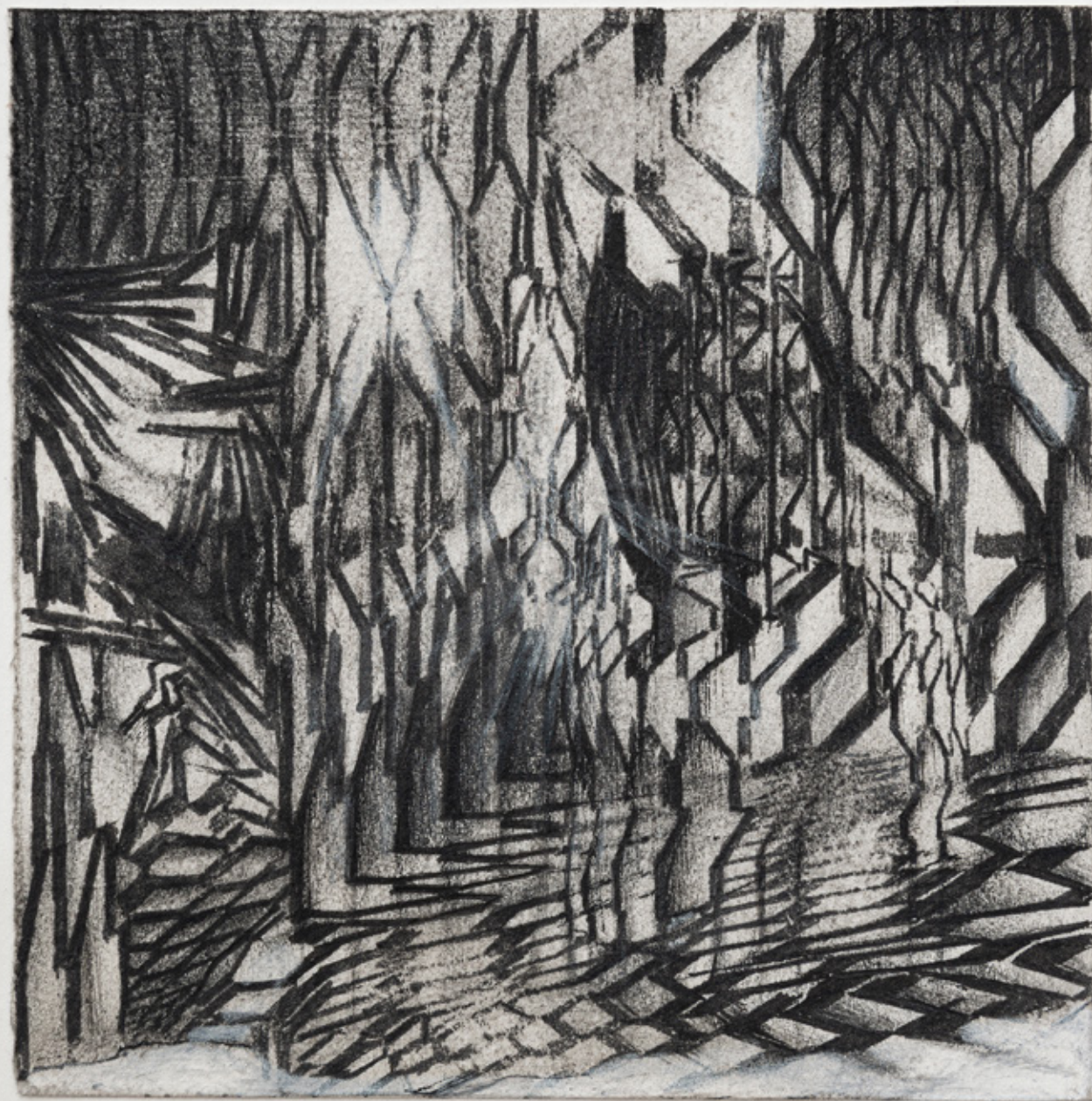
works on paper in artist frames, oil on canvas paintings

[further documentation](#)











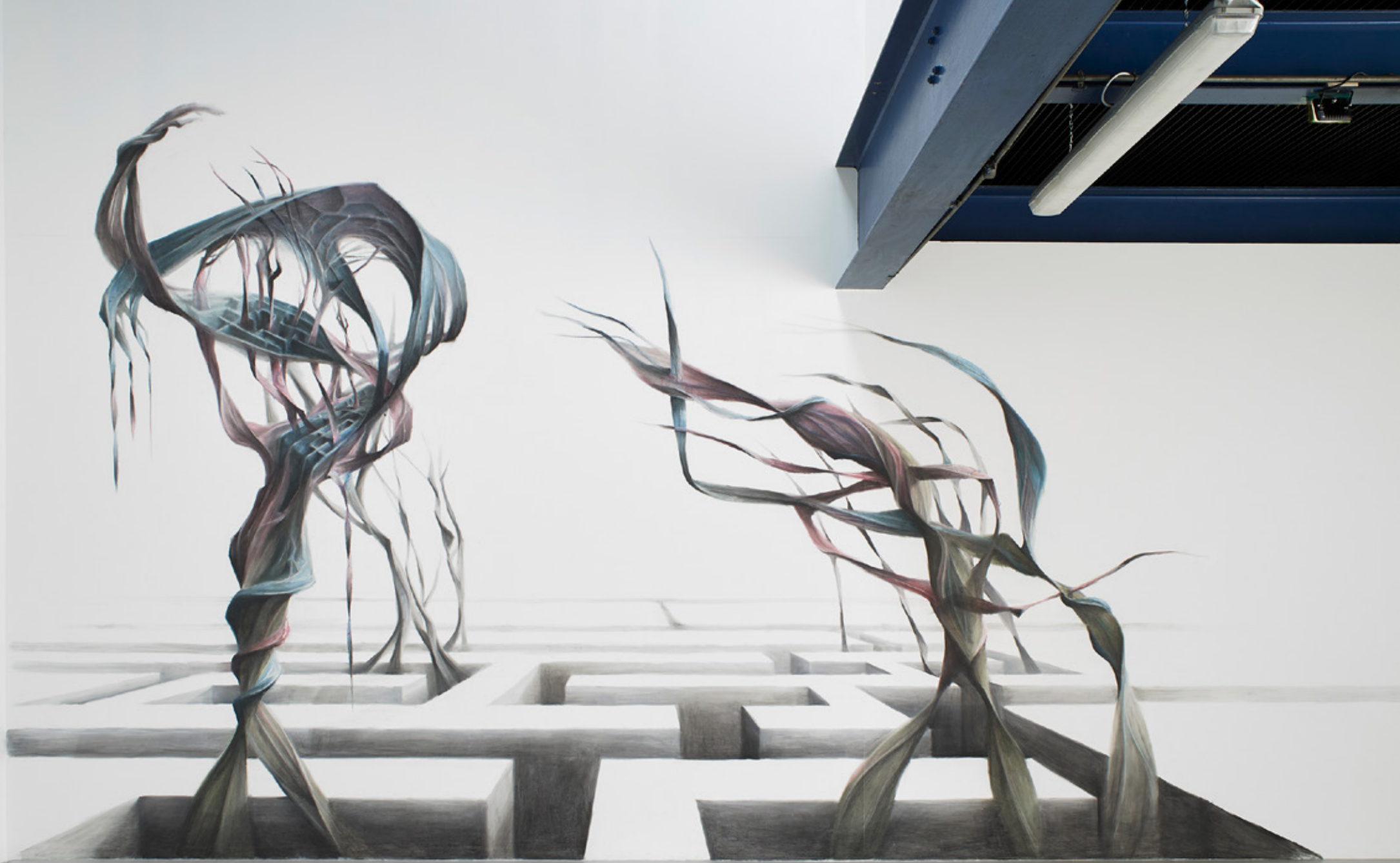


Four Characters In Search Of An Exit, 2021
exhibition at Berlin Atonal, Kraftwerk, Berlin
installation comprised of two-channel generative video, works on paper.

[exhibition info](#)
[related materials](#)
[video documentation](#)



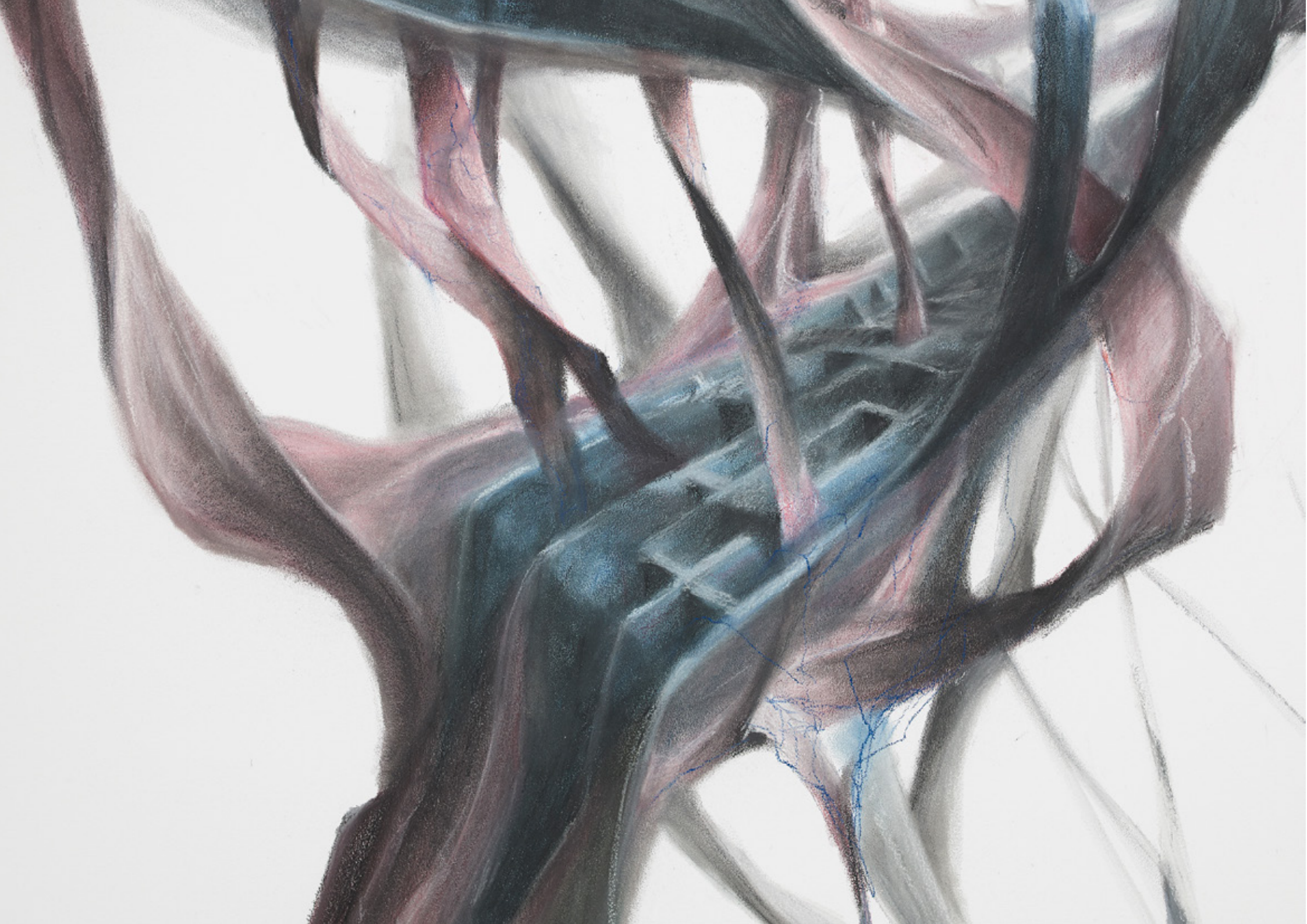




Godflower 7, 2019

part of *Modern Nature* group exhibition at Drawing Room, London curated by Katharine Stout
mural made with pastels, ~20 x 10' (6 x 3m)

[further documentation](#)





God Room, 2018

solo exhibition at Alyssa Davis Gallery, New York

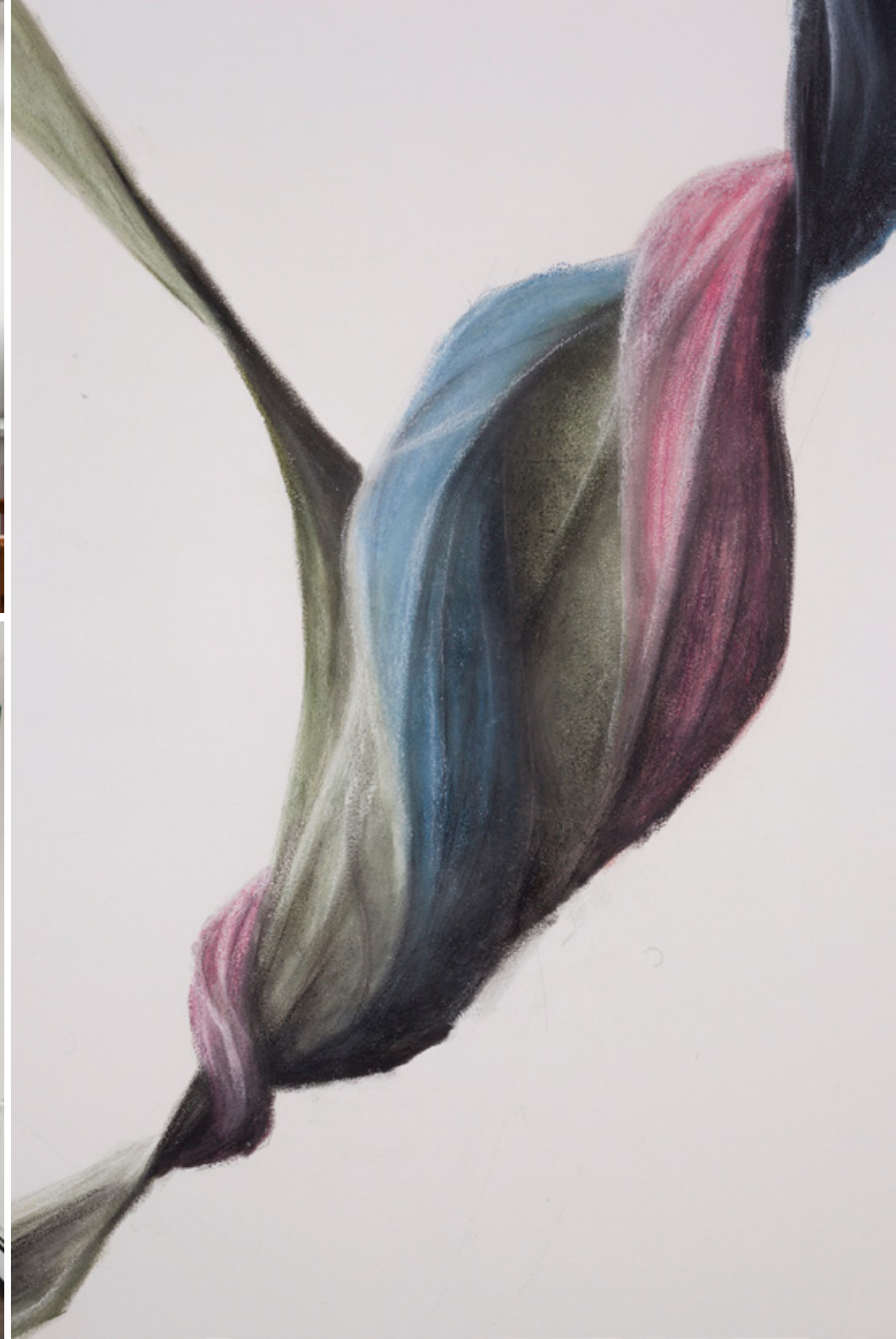
installation comprised of coloured pencil on paper,

pastel wall mural, two-channel generative video, keyboard, furniture

[further documentation](#)









SAZARUS, 2017

solo exhibition at Cordova, Vienna

installation comprised of digital print mounted on floor, nails, plastic, "hexbugs", television, rope

[further documentation](#)







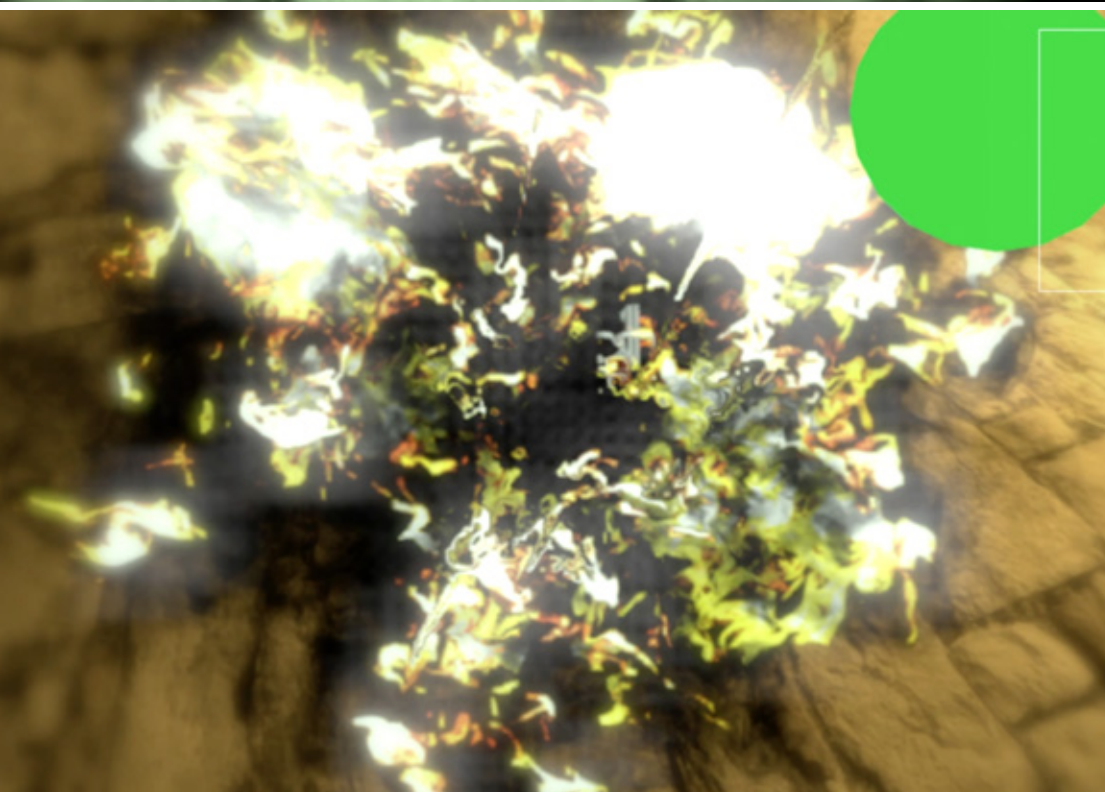
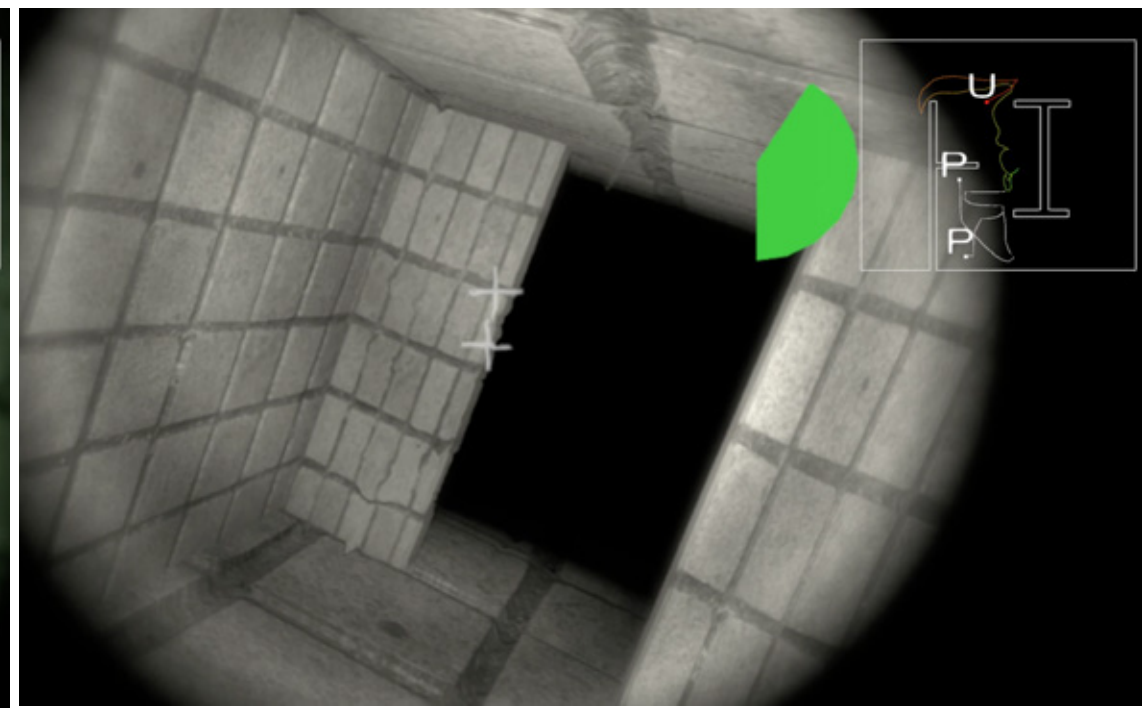
Sazarus IV, 2017

solo exhibition at Two Queens, Leicester UK
custom software, modified VR headset, chairs, carpet,
HD video, rope, digital print on paper, wood

[further documentation](#)







Select Works



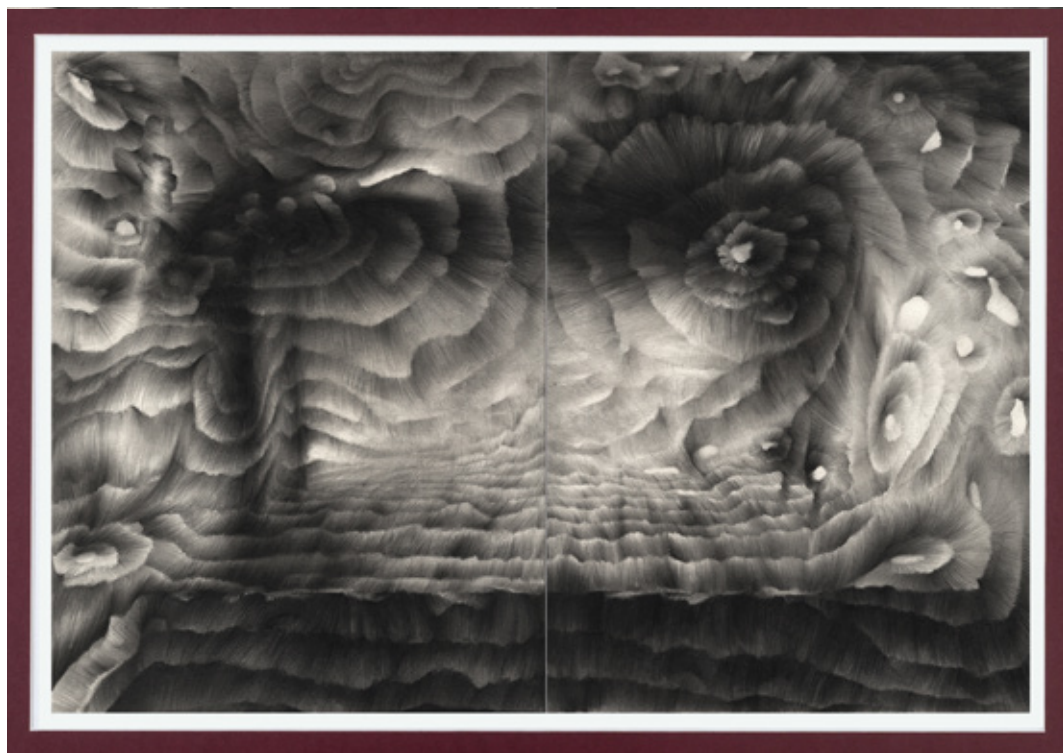
Two Timelines, 2023

Oil on canvas

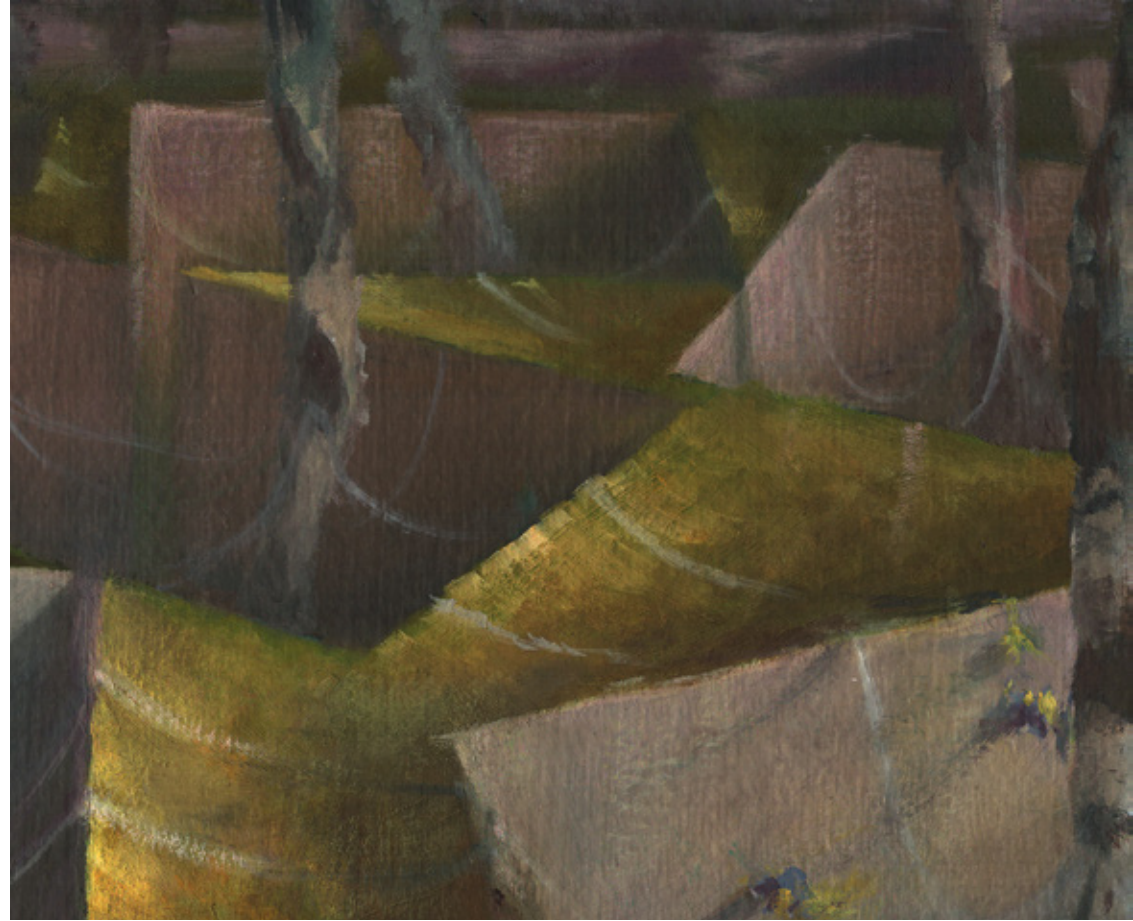
100 x 150cm (40 x 60")

Exhibited in [Circadian Gardens](#), eyes never sleep, New York





Foreign Staircase, 2023
 graphite on paper (in two parts)
 framed, black aluminum profile, red passepartout, museum glass
 30 in x 30 in (76 cm x 76 cm) framed, 11 in x 23.5 in (37.8 cm x 60 cm w/o frame)
 Exhibited in [2023](#) at Paris Internationale with kim?, Riga



Trees, 2022
 Oil on paper
 35 x 50 cm (14 x 20")
 Exhibited in [Telephone Conversations](#), Newton, New York



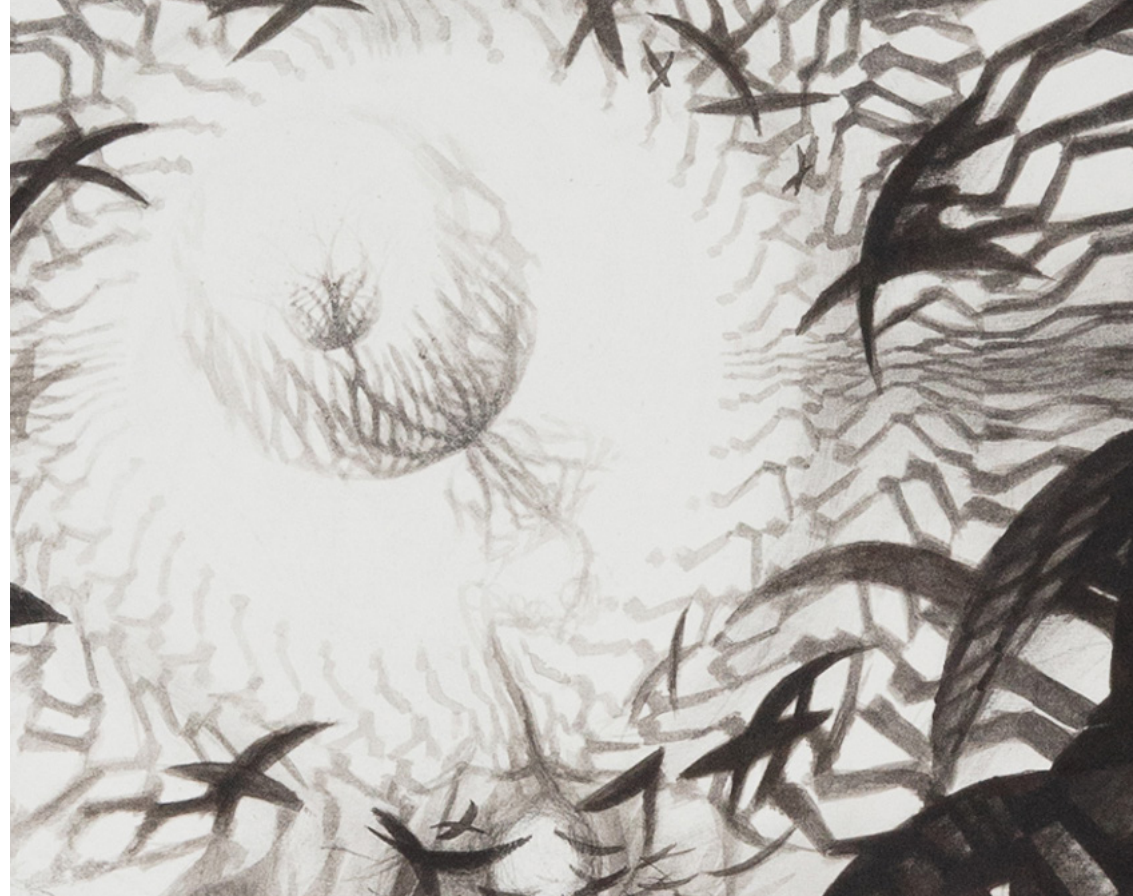
Sighting on 44th Street, 2023

Graphite on paper

30 x 40 cm (12 x 16")

Exhibited in [2023](#) at Paris Internationale with kim?, Riga



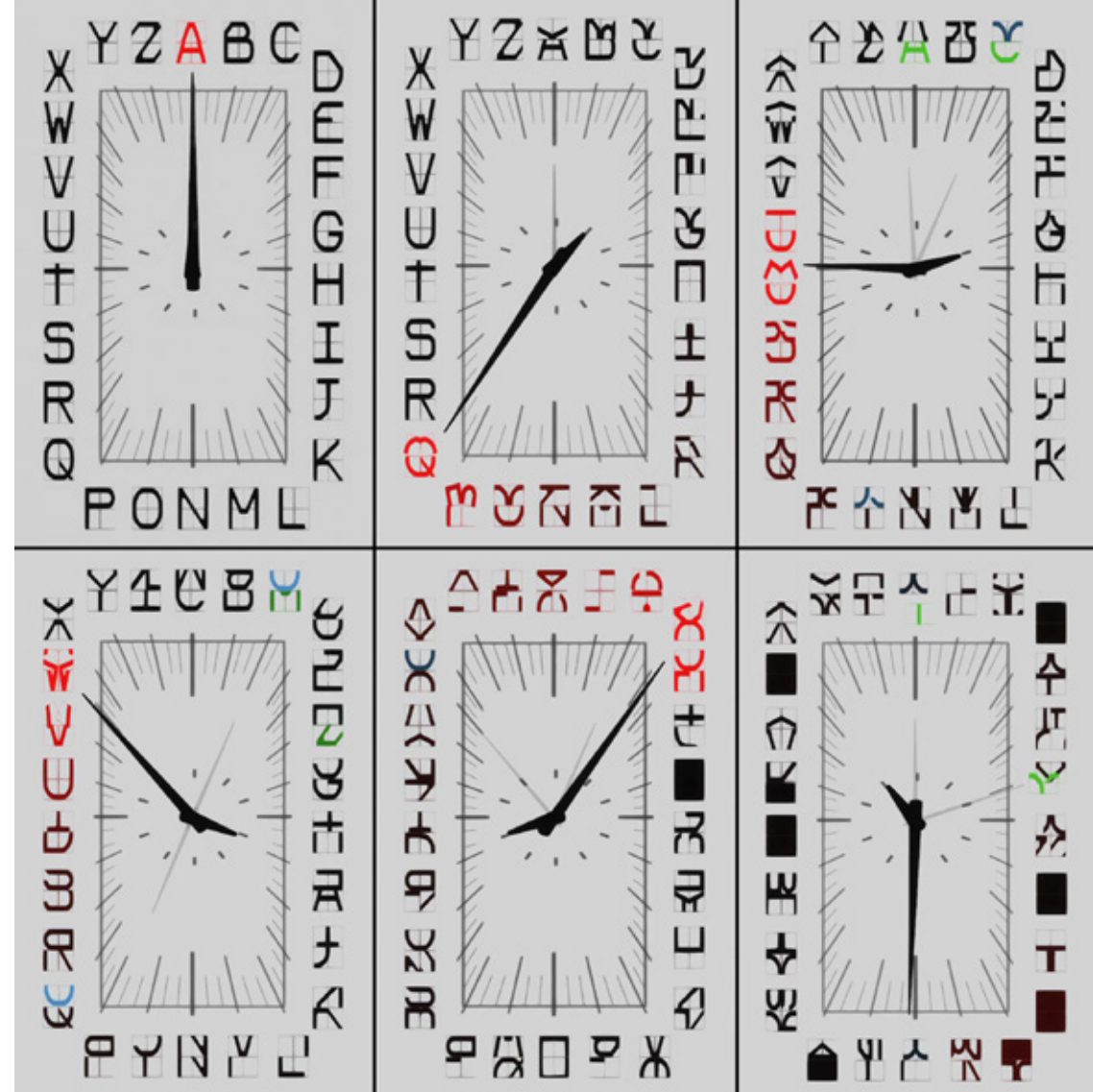


Selenophilia I, 2022

Indian ink on paper

55 x 75 cm (22 x 30")

Exhibited in [Crucible](#), Spencer Brownstone Gallery, New York



Circular Alphabet, 2021 - ongoing
 generative software ([video](#))
 duration infinite
 Exhibited in [DOG](#), Interstate projects, New York



Artificial Life and Death, 2022

Oil on paper

35 x 50 cm (14 x 20")

Exhibited in [Telephone Conversations](#), Newton, New York, 2022

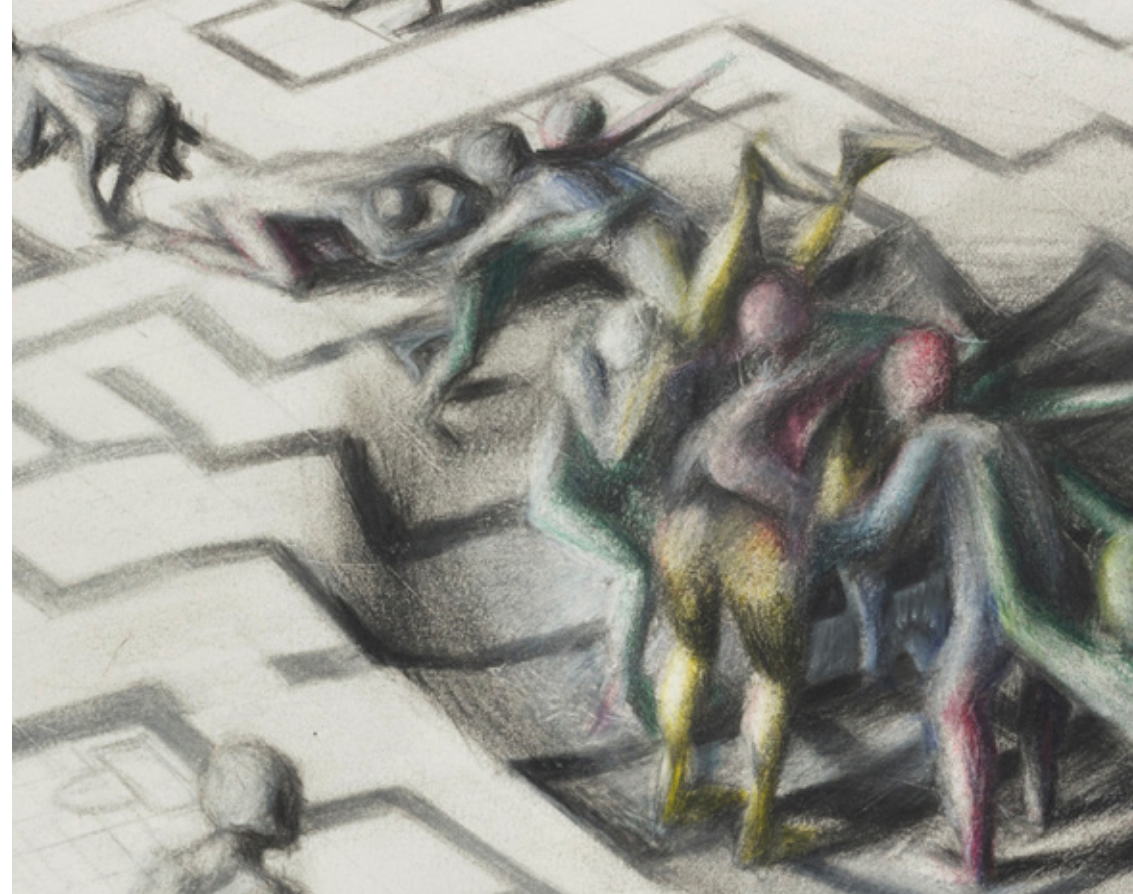


GODFLOWER X 1 & 2, 2020

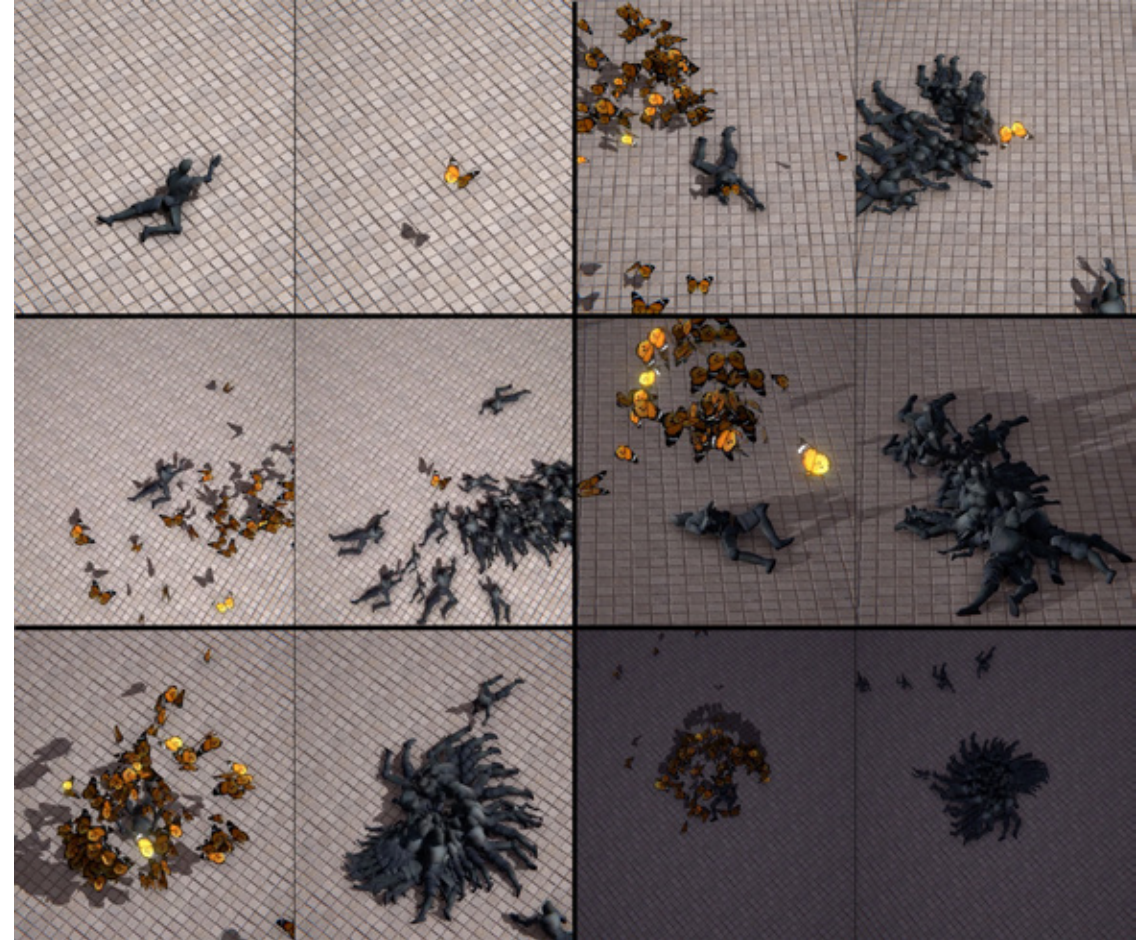
Oil on canvas

60 x 90 cm (24 x 36")

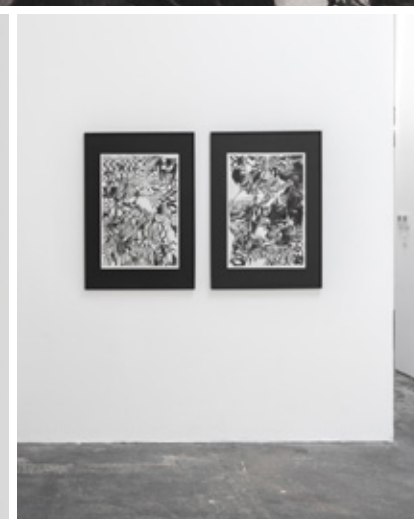
Exhibited in [Unexpected Encounters](#), Latvian National Gallery of Art, Riga, Latvia



Angels and Mnemons I, 2023
 Coloured pencil on paper
 30 x 40 cm (12 x 16")
 Exhibited in [DOG](#), Interstate projects, New York



Twodom (Two Protagonists), 2021
 generative software ([video](#))
 duration infinite
 Exhibited in [Hell March](#), eyesneversleep, New York

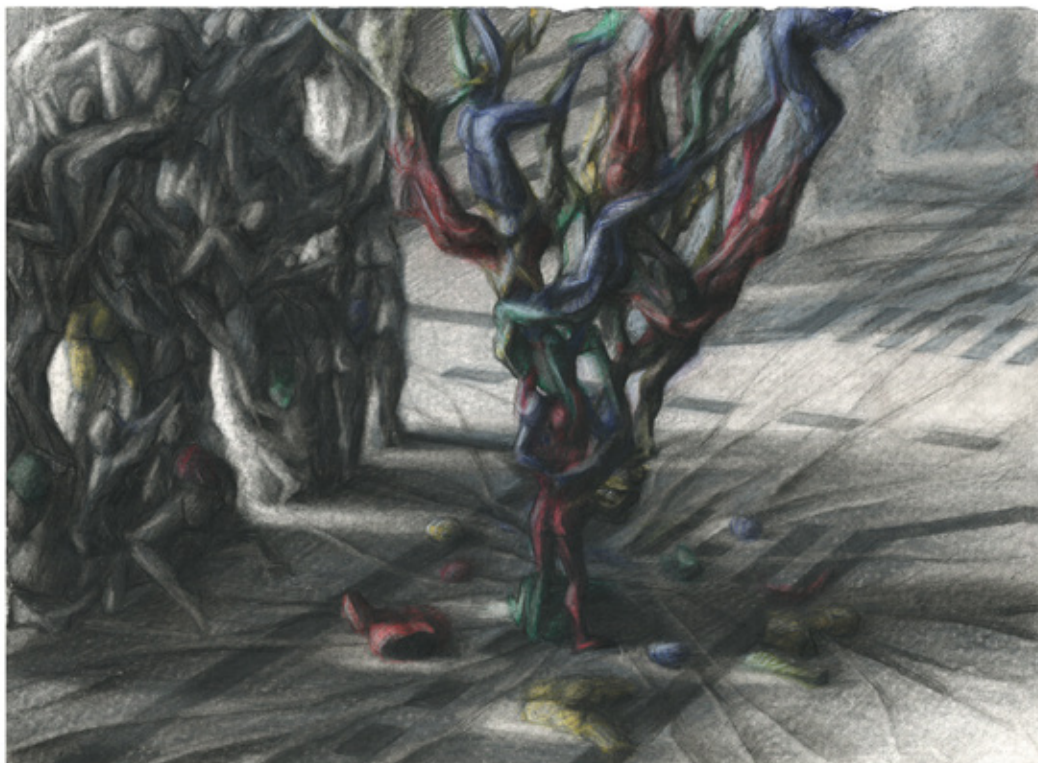


Selenophliia II, 2022

Indian ink on paper

55 x 75 cm (22 x 30")

Exhibited in [Crucible](#), Spencer Brownstone Gallery, New York



Angels and Mnemons III, 2023

Coloured pencil on paper

30 x 40 cm (12 x 16")

Exhibited in [Post-Digital Intimacy](#), Prague National Gallery, Prague



Fractal Sunset, 2022

Oil on paper

35 x 50 cm (14 x 20")

Exhibited in [Telephone Conversations](#), Newton, New York, 2022

Select Press

RIGA, LATVIA

Viktor Timofeev

KIM? CONTEMPORARY ART CENTRE

Viktor Timofeev's solo exhibition "Stairway to Melon" drew the viewer into the complex system of its own obscure inner logic. The Latvian-born, New York-based artist divided the gallery into two distinct spaces: He left the entry area blank white and transformed the rest into a sort of waiting room whose olive-green wallpaper was hung with paintings; on the carpeted floor, several folding chairs had been pushed to the walls or arranged in a circle. The scene looked like a stage set, but two monitors turned away from the viewer to face the back of the space encouraged visitors to enter the stage to see what was on the screen. And there was a further twist: When watching the video, the viewer could be observed from behind by other visitors sitting on the chairs pushed to the wall.



Viktor Timofeev, *Four Characters in Search of a Random Exit*, 2017, two-channel digital video, color, sound, indefinite duration.

This inverted logic of observer and observed, subject and object, was replicated in the two-channel video itself, whose title, *Four Characters in Search of a Random Exit* (all works 2017), obviously alludes to Luigi Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (1921). The video is in fact a programmed, noninteractive, self-playing game whose "user" becomes an immobile viewer of the frustrating Sisyphian efforts of four humanoid characters, all identical in appearance, dealing with obstacles in their separate realities. No clear logic determines the actions of the virtual characters—why one of them keeps seeing a maze of walls ahead, or another keeps chasing smaller versions of itself. Yet their repetitive movements and ritual-like actions seem choreographed. Without being able to intervene in the hermetic self-generative game, the viewer might begin to feel some empathy for these absurd artificial creatures. One screen presents all of this from an objective, outside perspective—giving us a sort of God's-eye view. The other shows what the protagonists see and experience, which is not visible and simply doesn't exist from the external point of view. Distinct realities occupy the same space, just as they do in the exhibition room itself.

Video games are typically based on reductive input-response and reward schemes, which they share with most approaches to artificial intelligence. In a fictional research paper, "DipMind Labs," a few copies of which had been left as if casually on some of the chairs, Timofeev parodies actual research on AI conducted by Google's DeepMind Lab. He proposes "to study how autonomous artificial agents may tackle complex problems in large, dynamic, partially observed, visually diverse, logically ambiguous and periodically chaotic worlds" and offers an understanding of consciousness as an unpredictable, irrational, forgetful, embodied entity. Instead of a method of learning, Timofeev proposes *unlearning*. In place of rule-following zombies, he proposes dancers.

The theme of the relationship of consciousness to the body was further developed in the four grisaille paintings on view, whose imagery evoked the five senses. Like the exhibition as a whole, each was titled *Stairway to Melon*, after the name of one of the levels of a game DeepMind Lab designed to test the capacities of artificial intelligences by pitting them against each other. The paintings depict mazelike spaces, familiar and alien, mathematically rigid and irrational at the same time. Those spaces are collisions of objective and subjective realities, thought and body, infinite possibilities of digital worlds and physical limits of the real. They are spaces for *unlearning* our established and rigid notions of consciousness, allowing us to dip our minds into irrationality, uncertainty, and ambiguity.

—Neringa Černiauskaitė

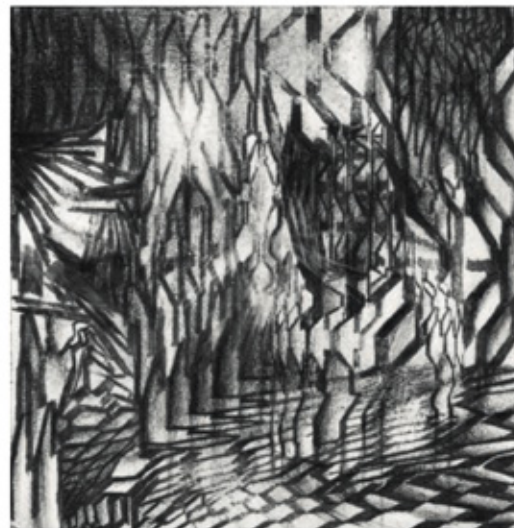


Stairway to Melon review in *ArtForum*, February 2018

[PDF](#)

VIKTOR TIMOFEEV Working across a variety of media, Viktor Timofeev creates haunting landscapes suffused with existential dread. In *(AB/AB)/B* (2018) multitudes of small, featureless figures cling to a large industrial-looking structure. These figures appear doomed to carry out a Sisyphean task, climbing to the apex only to fall back down and start their ascent again. On closer inspection, the structure reveals itself to be another, larger version of the same figure. The head has been cut open, revealing a maze-like grid in place of a brain. Like many of Timofeev's works, *(AB/AB)/B* is made using coloured pencil, with a palette of greys, reds and blues. A blurring effect gives the impression the entire scene is spinning, enhancing the sense of peril and hopelessness. Some figures crawl through the pathways of the maze; others leap over the edge into the masses below. In his novel *Invisible Cities* (1972), Italo Calvino wrote that, 'Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else.' A similar philosophy underpins Timofeev's drawings. His environments are filled with vague terrors, governed by unknown powers, rife with allegorical meanings that remain just beyond reach. *(AB/AB)/B* could be a depiction of the psychological turmoil of an individual or of an entire population toiling under totalitarian rule. Like waking from a distressing dream, the significance of which you are unable to fully place, the use of surreal imagery increases the mood of foreboding. In an interview with the publication *TZVETNIK*, Timofeev described his works as 'a patchwork of worlds: passing thoughts, fantasies, desires, what-ifs, curiosities, hallucinations, relations, urgencies'. While each of his drawings appears to portray a different scenario, they share certain factors in common. The most prominent of these is the grid, which forms a base layer in many of his compositions. No figures are present in the large wall drawing *Godflower X* (2019), made with hard pastel, but the ground is completely covered in a maze-like grid that stretches to the horizon line. It is not possible to ascertain how tall the walls of this architectural structure are, nor can you see what lies beneath. Out of the dark crevices, twisting forms rise like monstrous weeds towards a blank sky. Their stems and leaves do not look like those of plants, but a hybrid of mangled steel and human sinew. This is a place of death and danger, of which there is no end and from which there is no escape. Rosanna McLaughlin

.....
Born 1984, Riga, Latvia. Lives and works in New York.

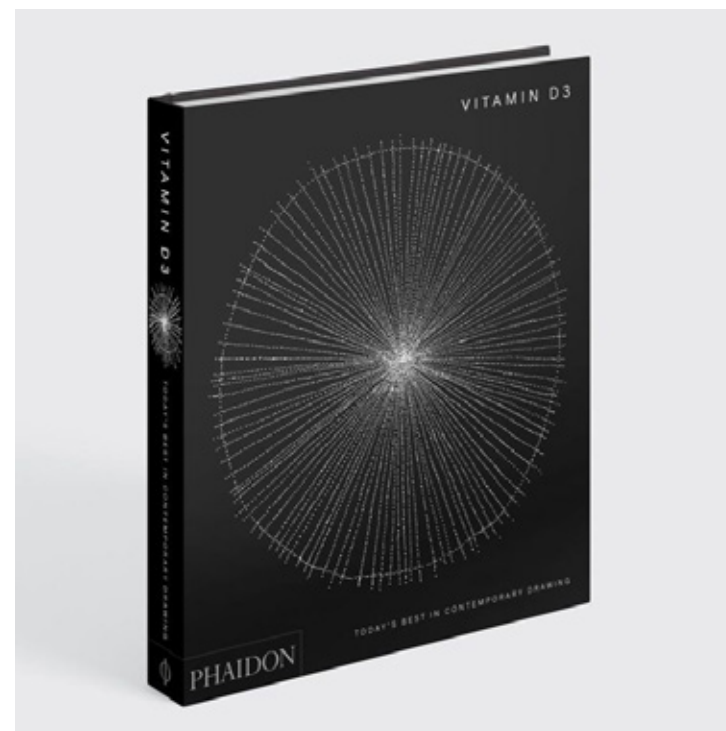


1.



2.

1. t2.17.2009 from 'Dallies (2009 x10)'; 2019, ink and pencil on paper, 15 x 15 cm (5.9 x 5.9 in)
2. Floating Ossuary; 2019, ink and pencil on paper, 35 x 28 cm (13 3/4 x 11 in), from 'I had amnesia once or twice'; Polansky Gallery, Brno, Czech Republic
3. *(AB/AB)/B*, 2018, coloured pencil on paper, 35 x 25 cm (13 3/4 x 9 3/4 in), from 'God Room'; Alyssa Davis Gallery, New York
4. *AB + AB*, 2018, coloured pencil on paper, 35 x 25 cm (13 3/4 x 9 3/4 in),



Vitamin D3: New Perspectives In Drawing, January 2021
[PDF](#)

The Brooklyn Rail has been invited to participate in the [2019 Venice Biennale](#) →

ARTSEEN

FEBRUARY 8TH, 2019

WEBEXCLUSIVE

Viktor Timofeev: *God Room*

by Alex A. Jones

Print Facebook Twitter

On the 11th floor of a Flatiron-style apartment building in Greenwich Village, the young gallerist Alyssa Davis has created a unique space for exhibiting work by emerging artists. Exhibitions over the past year have demonstrated a strong affinity for digitally-fluent work with elemental, earthy sensibilities, and a high standard for craft across a range of media. Site-specific interventions seem particularly encouraged by the gallery's unusual floor plan, in which marble columns separate a small antechamber from a grand, triangular room formed by the corner of Cornelia Street and Sixth Avenue below, resembling the helm of a ship with panoramic views of Manhattan.

NEW YORK
Alyssa Davis Gallery
December 21, 2018 - February 24, 2019

The current exhibition, Viktor Timofeev's *God Room*, makes especially strong use of the space. The show revolves around an algorithmically de-generating alphabet, which was designed and programmed by Timofeev, and which is presented in the form of a dual-channel video. However, the way this complex digital entity is introduced to the viewer is so integrally interwoven with elements of drawing, sound, and installation design that the totality is hardly legible as a collection of discrete objects or conceptual moves, and the exhibition is better understood as a work of theater activated by the visitor's exploration.

Upon entering the apartment gallery, the resonant sound of a slowed-down clock pendulum conjures a sensation of time slipping slowly away, similar to the attenuated experience we may associate with waiting. Indeed, we appear to be in a waiting room: cheap chairs have been staged on opposite sides of the gallery's antechamber, and a TV screen is mounted vertically on the wall, posed so that one might look up at it expectantly waiting for a number to be called. Appearing on the screen is a group of symbols that are vaguely familiar, even archetypal: a staircase, an embryo, a crawling man, a labyrinth. Beside these are words that would appear to explain the icons' precise meaning, but which are comprised of alien and illegible letters—ones whose shapes mutate with each slow tick of the clock, like the unstable glyphs of a Lovecraftian language. Across the room, the pictorial motifs are echoed in six small drawings featuring ant-like human figures that crawl through nested labyrinths and cavernous architecture. The drawings abound with symbols, but their messages are unrecognizable thanks to the inscrutable key on the TV screen.



Viktor Timofeev, *Abecedarium for A and B*, 2018. Two-channel generative video, infinite duration. Courtesy Alyssa Davis.



Viktor Timofeev, Installation view: *God Room*, Alyssa Davis Gallery, 2018. Courtesy Alyssa Davis.

These grim little drawings would look appropriate in the lobby of purgatory, where you might study them while waiting for your appointment with fate. In the case of this limbo, however, you'd be waiting a long time: the chamber beyond the waiting room is empty. Through the threshold of columns that divides this fictional space is the "God Room," where a computer is running at an empty desk beneath a monumental drawing of twisting, rope-like forms on the walls and ceiling. The computer is generating the cryptic alphabet that updates on the waiting room marquee in time with the ticking pendulum. The symbol scrambler is on autopilot (apparently God is out of office). You can physically navigate a map of the alphabet at this workstation, and in theory, one could use this key to "de-code" the messages on the waiting-room screen. But because the alphabet is degenerating so rapidly, the task is effectively impossible. By the time you could get from one chamber to the other, the letters will have morphed again. The narrative set into motion by the interlocking elements of *God Room* reflects a zeitgeist of estrangement—the absent god, the realization that "no one is steering the ship," that the code is unbreakable—these potentially melancholic or cynical sentiments are suited to an age of anxiety toward the occult nature of our digital technologies. Today, we attempt to navigate a present in which the information networks once thought to illuminate reality have, if anything, left us more confused.

However, Timofeev's elegantly designed entropic alphabet is not just about the encryption and inscrutability of digital technology, but also of language itself. The mutated letters most resemble some ancient script, reminding us that since the very beginning, communication has been mediated by "coders." The earliest known phonetic alphabet, cuneiform (in widespread use around 3500 BCE), was difficult to read and write, such that its highly trained scribes held considerable social power as gatekeepers of business transactions, history, and cultural memory. Their role was not so different from that of contemporary programmers who type in tongues like Python, Lisp, Perl, Ruby, Agora—esoteric codes that comprise the digital age, and which will no doubt eventually be forgotten.

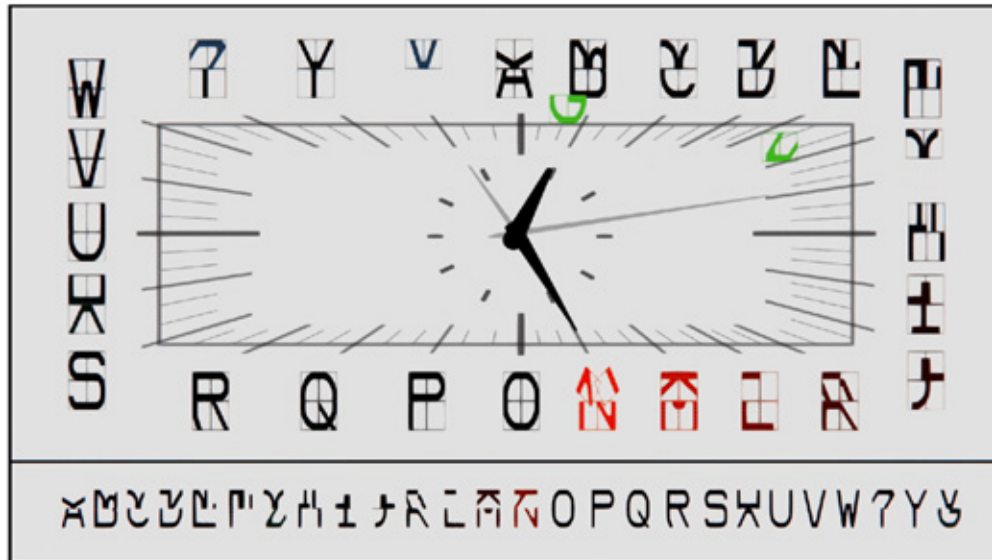
Fifty years ago, Marshall McLuhan pointed out the inextricability of communication from the form which it takes, declaring that "the medium is the message." This remains a driving interest of many new media artists who interrogate how "the digital" fundamentally alters, threatens, or expands human notions of life. By contrast, while the programmed alphabet binds the narrative of *God Room*, its digital form seems incidental; the effect would be essentially unchanged if we were confronted instead with a set of stone tablets pressed with cuneiform. Rather than engaging in the breathless chase of an ever-accelerating present, Timofeev spins a more interesting, expansive yarn—one most fully symbolized by the abstract mural adorning the *God Room*, which resembles mathematical string figures as well as creeping vines, organic forms in an active state of evolution. They invoke weaving and unravelling—meaning coming together as it falls apart.

CONTRIBUTOR

Alex A. Jones

ALEX A. JONES is a contributor to the Brooklyn Rail.

God Room review in *The Brooklyn Rail*, February 2019
[Link](#)



Viktor Timofeev, [Human Abecedary](#) (Horizontal Clock version) (2018–21). Custom software, infinite duration. Courtesy of the

[Artist Profile on Rhizome.org](#), March 2022

The latest in a series of interviews with artists who have a significant body of work that makes use of or responds to network culture and digital technologies.

Elizaveta Shneyderman: Despite being in the same community of NYC, digital-materially focused art Slavs, it wasn't until I first encountered your installation [DOG](#) at Interstate Projects that I had an "aha" moment with your work. The exhibition was effectively robbed of its potential for true interactivity: *Chat*, your self-playing game, was left to endlessly feed identical responses to increasingly illegible questions. I've noticed this remediation of contemporary sensory experience—as a trope of your work more broadly—has developed in grit and context over the years. What core themes are embedded in these works of procedurally-driven mutation and encryption?

Viktor Timofeev: I'm really glad something clicked! *DOG*, the installation at Interstate Projects, was my most recent attempt at making an environment evoke something like a discarded interface. I'll break down some of its components. The exhibition centered around a questionnaire program, *Chat*. *Chat* was written out in a generative alphabet, a cipher, that made each question progressively harder and more impossible to read. There were two computer terminals, each with a study carrel complete with monitor and keyboard, running the questionnaire program. A large LCD monitor hung in the middle of the room, which visually mimicked the layout of an analog clock, but replaced the twelve-hour numerals with twenty-six letters of the English alphabet. This "alphabet clock" charted the state of each letter forming the words in the questionnaire, and worked as the key to the cipher text. The key was changing at a pace that made it next to impossible to keep up with, mutating one letter per second. The exhibition room also incorporated monochromatic gray walls, a pastel mural of an ascending trompe l'oeil staircase, and five colored pencil drawings.

Palace brother: Viktor Timofeev



Viktor Timofeev

Palace Of Peace And Reconciliation/Live At No Moon

Lo Bit Landscapes DL/LP+CD

Exocursion

Futura Resistenza DL/LP

There's an evocative appeal to imagining Viktor Timofeev's *Palace Of Peace And Reconciliation* as both intrinsically digital age and, conversely, an artefact uncovered from some mouldering ancient edifice. Granted, the impression of it's artefact-ness makes some demands of the imagination. In development since 2012, its release has been significantly stalled by the summary closure in 2014 of the Brooklyn live/work space that housed label Lo Bit Landscapes.

The reality of being locked out of your loft with your stuff inside for over half a decade is probably a pedestrian and deeply unenchanted nightmare with precious little glow. *Palace* glows hard, though; hard enough to illuminate the bays, domes and towers of some barely glimpsed phantasmic sacred architecture. That required imaginative reach – the one that allows us to think of it as an eerily arrested, excised thing shunted off down a spatio-temporal slipstream – is generously supported by the album's rich atmospheric and psychic space.

Named after a multi-faith cultural centre in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan – an ersatz pyramid built in the mid-2000s – the album comprises five tracks, and, as a gatefold LP edition features a bonus CD (*Live At No Moon*) with six more. The main feature has

a big, vaulted, immersive sound lightly banded with a few idiomatic nods. There's a soft clanging in the opener "Tavek Fritolov" which had me puzzling for something I initially couldn't place, but turned out to be the Coil track "The Avatars", while the shimmering quasi dream pop guitar of "Memoratorium" made me think of early 2000s Fennesz reacquainting noise with its estranged descendent – the blissed-out, gauzy jangle. Elsewhere, the opening of "Pyramid Of Accord" fires a volley of frayed and fetid death metal bellows over some limpid flickering, suggesting Autopsy's Chris Reifert struggling to wake from a sun-kissed nightmare.

Signifiers aside, *Palace*, at its innermost, uppermost and utmost, feels like it should be experienced untethered on an updraft, with maps and notes falling uselessly away into darkness. It is nonetheless helpful to note Timofeev's practice as a contemporary visual artist, which can come across like a gamer's take on the loose post minimalist tendency known as Systems Art or Systems Aesthetics. Timofeev is something of a techno-demiurge type of artist, a worldbuilder for whom data both creates and constitutes the very brick and mortar of our environs, be they sacred, bureaucratic, hallowed or absurdly institutional.

It's tempting to say this animus comes to the fore in all his visual and musical output, but the bonus disc *Live At No Moon* deftly pulls the rug from under that pat analysis, which makes it a good companion piece. As a suite of frenetic, uncanny mantras leaning heavily on staccato rhythms and the repetition of

liturgical sounding phrases, the contrast with the largely beatless, breathless *Palace* could hardly be more pronounced. It is worth listening to the two back to back while noting that, in terms of discrete passages, the latter has some of the most memorable of the package, most notably the captivating five minute coda of "Nightfall, City35".

For further contrast, see *Exocursion*, released earlier this year by Belgian/Dutch label Futura Resistenza. It has markedly more cinematic, panoramic qualities than the architectonic *Palace*, even though explicit reference is made to the built environment. "When The Bridge Speaks" seems to be composed of field recordings from what could be one bridge, a composite polyphony of bridges or a range of proximities around one or more bridges. What seems most important is the conjecture that the bridge has a voice, hence a story, both of which are constructed and carried on whorls of passing traffic unspooling in concrete chambers.

Coil comparisons come to mind again: *Exocursion*'s most melancholy moments brace for the keening of Stephen Thrower's lonesome clarinet, while others seem to expand on the kind of sketches found on *Worship The Glitch*. Collected sketches, plans or provisional storyboard studies may be an apt analogy, as implied by an accompanying series of illustrations, one per track – part speculative landscape design, part floodplain model for a deterritorialised net of liquefying grids. If they correspond to anything like a narrative, it's a fittingly hermetic one.

James Gormley



Exocursion / Palace of Peace review in *Wire*, October 2021

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