

la nature

REN HAN SELECTED WORKS

DU MOYEN

la
Véritable
Histoire

TOME
II

Jean-andré
FAUCHER

la
Véritable
Histoire

TOME
I

Jean-andré
FAUCHER

DB YE SHUXIAN – MICHEL SAUQUET

La Passio

René-Victor Pilhes *L'imprécat*

itions du Seuil

ALBIN
MICHEL

Raoul Mille Les chiens ivres

Bio

Ren Han (b. 1984, Tianjin, CN) currently lives and works in Paris. He obtained a bachelor's degree in oil painting from Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts in 2006 and a master's degree in art (DNSEP) from École Nationale Supérieure d'Arts de Nice - Villa Arson in 2011. He has participated in art residencies in Paris, Lyon, Matsudo, and Chengdu.

Born in the year associated with George Orwell's 1984, Ren Han's formative years were shaped by China's rapid urbanization and the global rise of the internet. Ren Han was born in the year coinciding with the title of George Orwell's dystopian novel "1984," and his formative years unfolded amidst the explosive urbanization in China and the rapid global proliferation of the internet. When it comes to Ren Han's work, what stands out most is his concept of the "damaged drawing," where he uses tools such as axes, hammers, and drills to carve into surfaces like walls, wooden panels, or piles of books. He "draws" in a surface-destructive manner the media-counterfeit or technologically simulated nature. These poetic yet unsettling "drawings" break the two-dimensional boundaries, embedding themselves into space or merging with architecture to surround people. They possess a duality between reality and fiction, construction and destruction, death and rebirth. In this simulation society we find ourselves in, created by mass media, the artist seeks to evoke reflection on the chaotic state of the world. He once said, "I question the meaning of humans continually constructing and deconstructing under the impetus of desire," and his work is a Sisyphean response to the world.

His works have been exhibited in institutions such as Monnaie de Paris; Centquatre, Paris; Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris; Asian Art Museum, Nice; Jimei x Arles International Photo Festival, Xiamen; Today Art Museum, Beijing; Times Museum, Beijing; Taikang Space, Beijing; Nanjing Art Academy Art Museum; OCAT, Xi'an; Moscow Museum of Modern Art, etc. He has also held solo exhibitions in Paris, Lyon, Berlin, and Beijing. In 2024, he was invited by UCCA Lab to create large-scale site-specific installations for the opening exhibitions of the Shanghai ARC'TERYX Museum and Zhoushan Art Museum.





Spectacle

Ren Han collects a vast array of online landscape images drawn from advertisement wallpapers, travel photography, technological visuals, and more. Using these as the foundation for his works, he creates intricate drawings on paper and walls. On black surfaces, he carves or traces these landscapes—steely peaks and flowing waters—through engravings and graphite lines. In Ren Han's perspective, these natural scenes are not merely sacred illusions; they also embody concepts of the primitive and the eternal. Although the subjects of these drawings may evoke the traditions of German Romanticism and Chinese landscape painting, these influences serve only as vessels for Han's broader concerns with consumption and decline. Rather than portraying these landscapes in an idealized way, the artist presents them as transformed by a society steeped in ennui. Ren Han introduces a satirical dimension, positioning his work between the sacred and the consumable to critique the overwhelming effects of information overload. This process of image displacement reflects new social behaviors, where the need for meaning has been replaced by an almost desperate search for entertainment.

Ascent 24d01 detail
plasterboard wall sawing, chopping, chiseling
2024
ARC'TERYX Museum, Shanghai(CN)
commissioned by UCCA Lab



Untitled (23d01)
plasterboard wall sawing, chopping, chiseling
2023
Musée du Nouvel Institut Franco-Chinois, Lyon(FR)

detail



Chao
plasterboard wall sawing, chopping, chiseling
H300 x W1200 x D25 cm
2024
Winland Center, Hangzhou(CN)

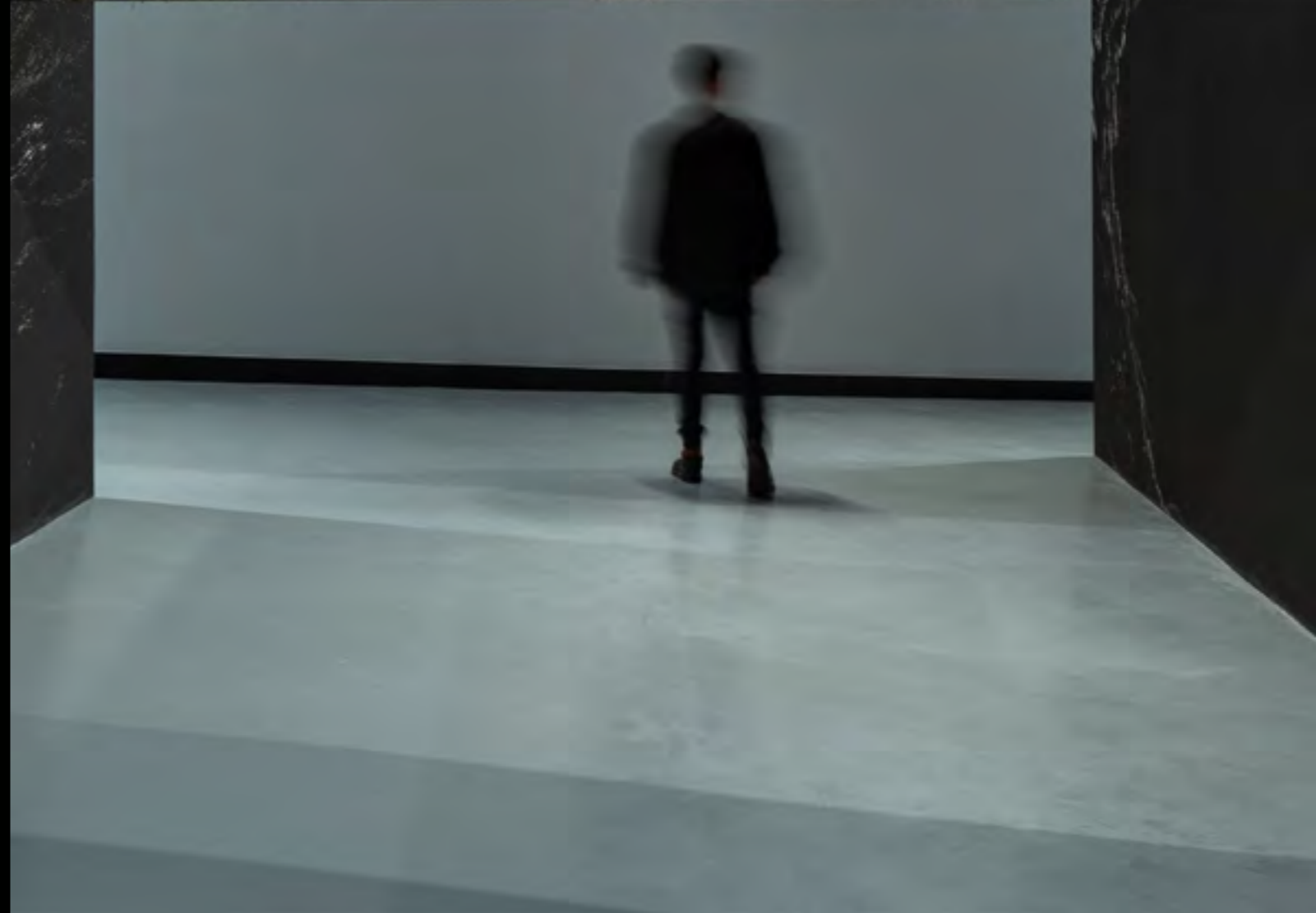
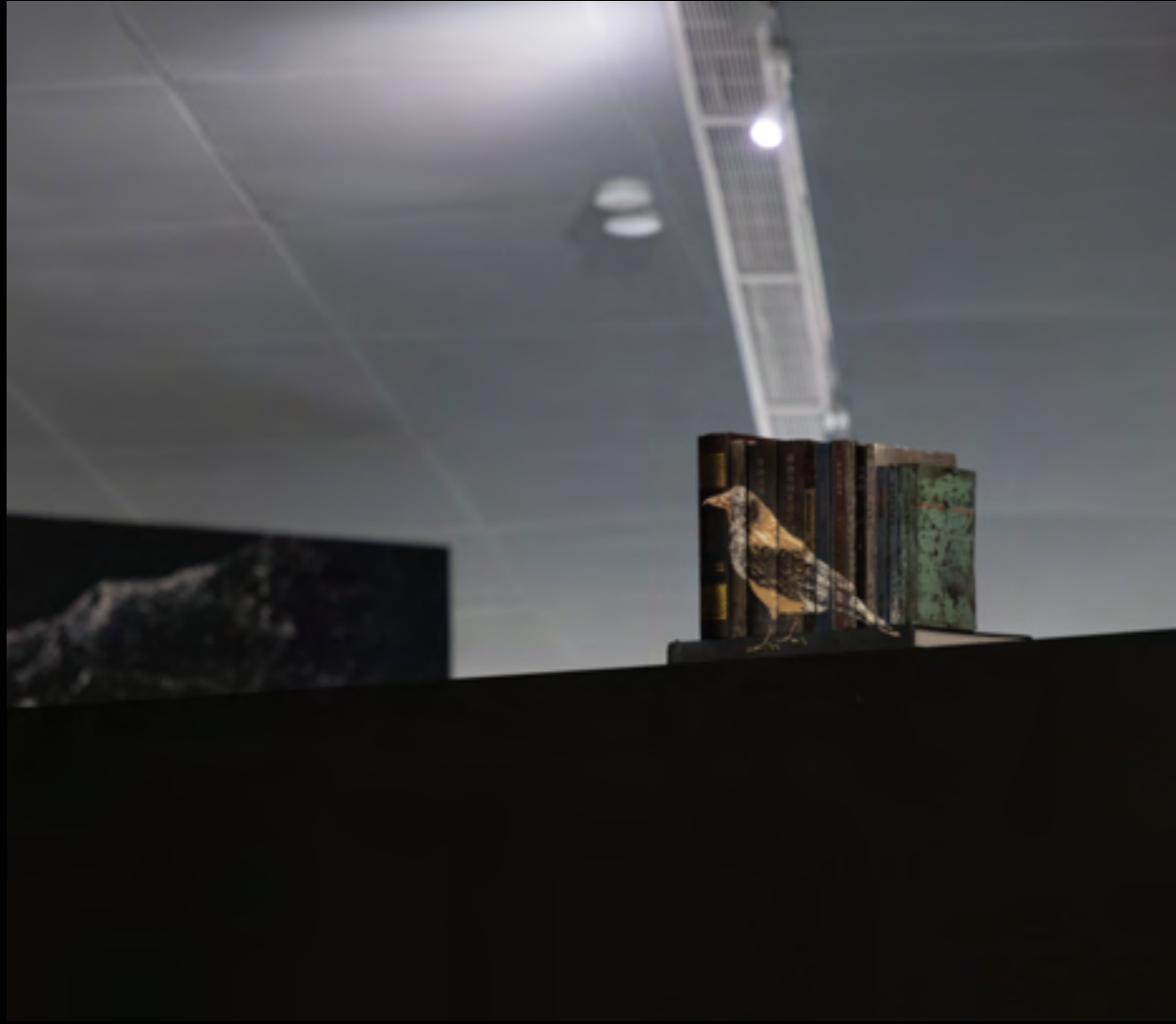


Labyrinth of Water

plaster, wooden wall sawing, chopping, chiseling, founded books
dimensions Variable (total carved wall surface approx. 350 m²)

2024

Zhoushan Art Museum(CN)
commissioned by UCCA Lab



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plaster, wooden wall sawing, chopping, chiseling, founded books
dimensions Variable (total carved wall surface approx. 350 m²)

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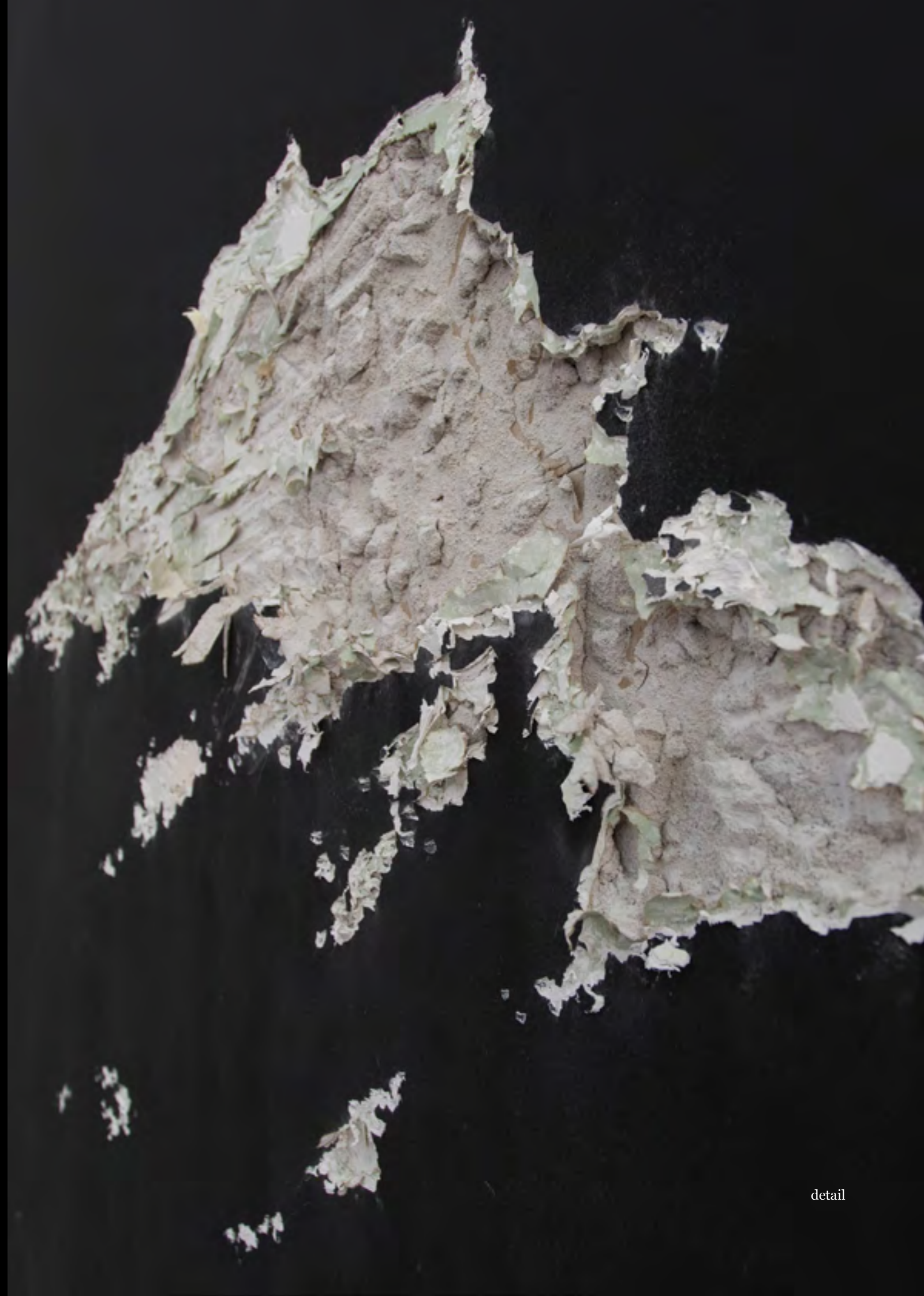


Fountain
calcium silicate wall sawing, chopping, chiseling
dimensions variable (two facades of the building)
2024
CPI, Chengdu(CN)
commissioned by A4 Residency Art Center



Fountain (detail)
calcium silicate wall sawing, chopping, chiseling
dimensions variable (two facades of the building)
2024
CPI, Chengdu(CN)

detail



96F80E2B-72D2-4E0C-9261-59CC2BCEBCB6
plasterboard wall sawing, chopping, chiseling
2016
Taikang Space, Beijing(CN)

detail



4,000,000,000

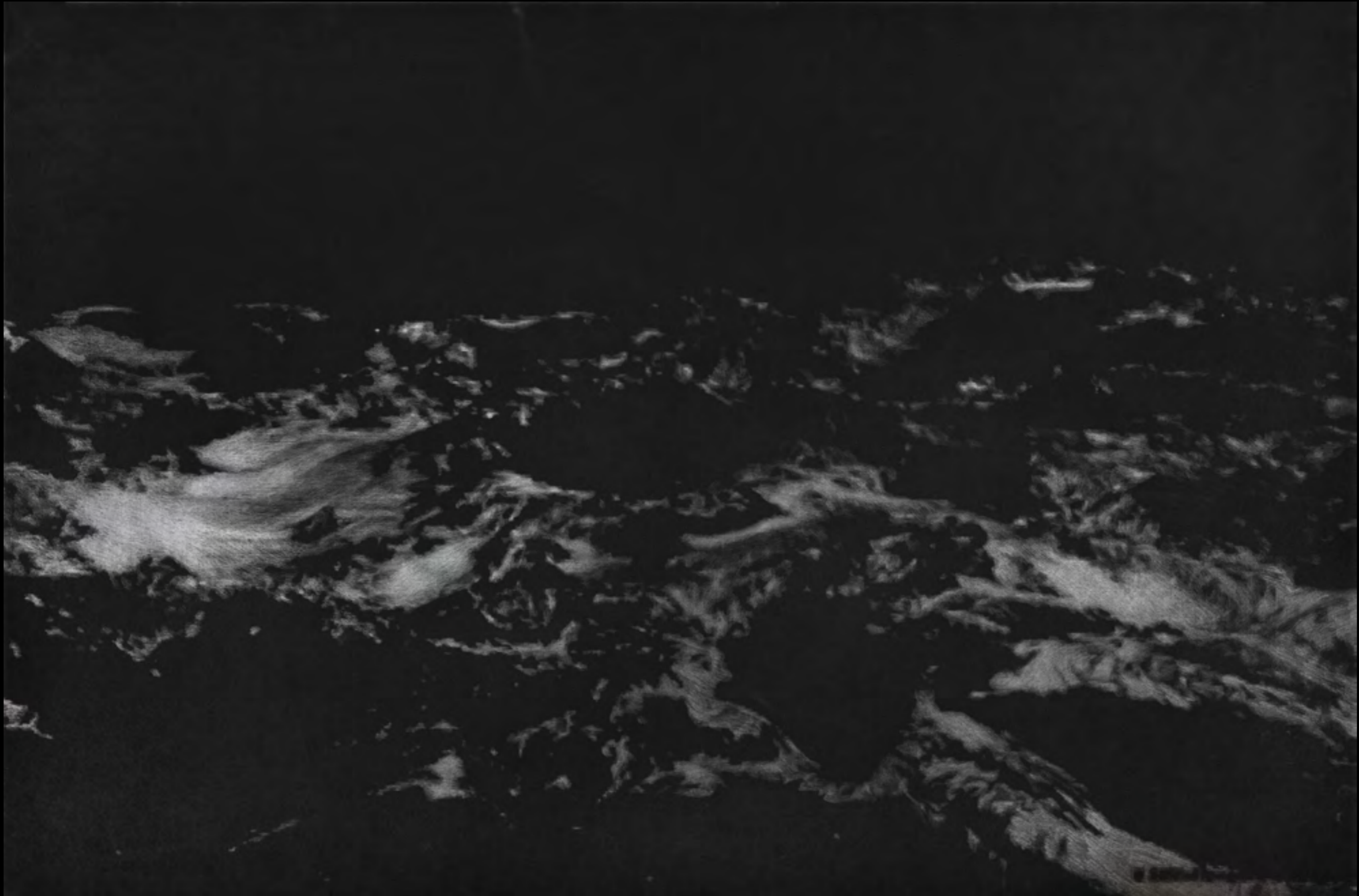
white flag, plasterboard wall, chopping and digging
2019

Le Beffroi, Montrouge(FR)
and RAIBAUDI WANG Gallery

With the support of: Ministry of Cultural Affairs of France, Department of Hauts-de-Seine, City of Montrouge



16280023839191628002344390
graphite on paper
42 x 42 cm
2021



Ce8MuGAjZ7a
graphite on paper
80 x 120 cm
2021



2348060
graphite on paper
66 x 100 cm
2020



Untitled (Volcano #1)
purple carbon paper, pastel
83.5 x 65 cm
2023

Cloud

Ren Han has devised a series of hybrid techniques, utilizing various tools such as electric saws, grinders, knives, and axes, to ingeniously replace pencil drawing with subtractive methods on different materials. For instance, in his "Disaster Landscape" series on purple carbon paper, he repeatedly strikes the back of the paper with a jigsaw, creating a unique drawing combining gesture and mechanical movement. This series no longer depicts magnificent snow mountains, but presents chaotic scenes of natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, mudslides, and storms. This type of carbon paper is typically used in impact printers and is a precursor of the information age. Ren Han believes that the excessive production of information today disrupts our connection with the material world. He emphasizes the role of the hand in drawing, and the demanding control over the hand when using high-speed power tools for creation. He calls this practice "a dance between hand and acceleration tools", detaching perception of time and space, akin to meditation facing a screen. Subsequently, these suggestive and mechanical strokes form turbines, leading the audience into a world beyond the tangible.

This interest in the intangible extends to his works depicting clouds on the surfaces of installations or buildings, evoking associations with Baroque art traditions, contemporary 3D digital aesthetics, and the influence of Taoist aesthetics. Clouds today symbolize the visualization of the virtual network world, filled with captivating information from the cloud. When a dark cloud approaches or envelops us, it is both a threat and a fascinating presence. Ren Han's works evoke post-human scenes of climate change and human disappearance, while also suggesting the existence of an elusive transcendence.



Untitled (Debris Flow #1) detail
purple carbon paper
118 × 176 cm
2016



Untitled (17e01)
wood, chopping and cutting
2017
Qi Mu Space, Beijing(CN)



23e03
craved bamboo screen
165 x 250 x 0.3 cm
2023
Galerie Met, Berlin(DE)



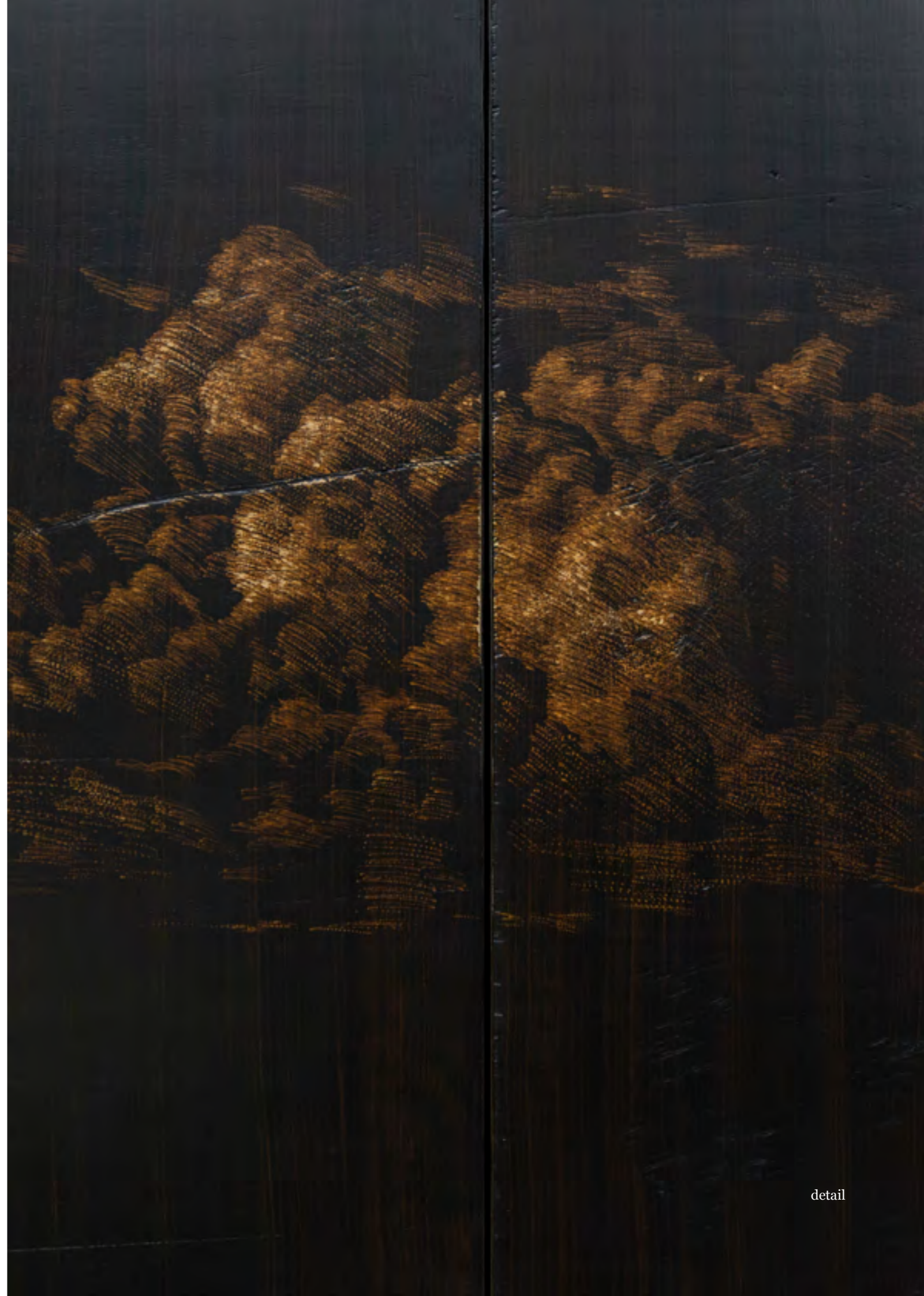
24g02
calcium silicate wall board sawing, chopping, chiseling
dimensions variable
2024
haus101, Chengdu(CN)



Cloud in the Imaginary Temple
printing PVC, laser sticker, graphite, paper
2023
PARADISE AIR, Matsudo(JP)
collaboration with Daniel Kessner



Untitled (22e02) (front and back)
four-fold screen, carved on old wood
95 x 90 cm (95 x 22.3 cm each)
2022



detail

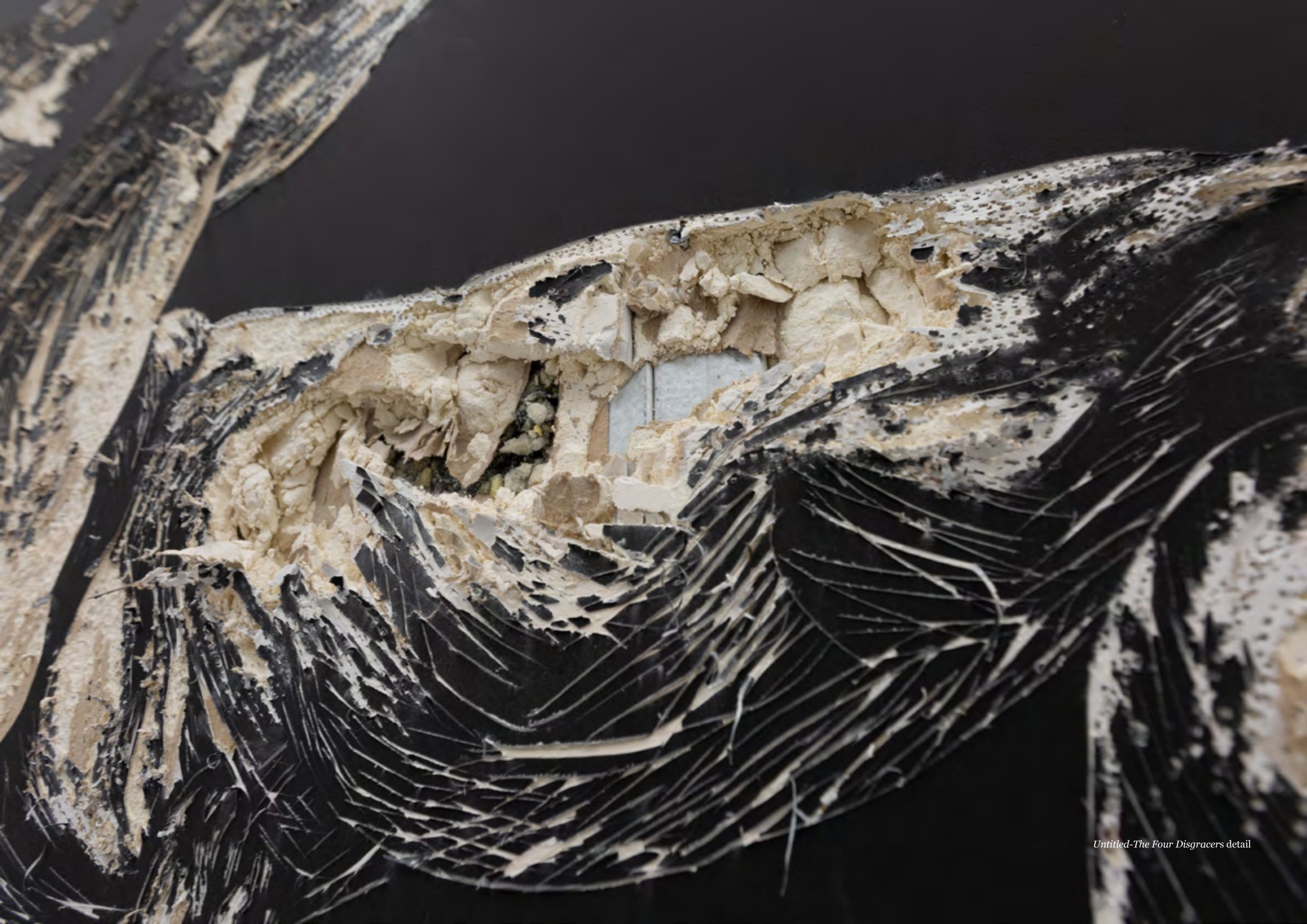


Untitled-The Four Disgracers
plasterboard wall, chopping and digging
180 x 250 x 25 cm
2022
Zeto Art, Paris(FR)

Fall

Writer and curator Gérard Wajcman once wrote, "From the Berlin Wall to the Twin Towers, the 21st century was born in falls." Amidst a series of works depicting mountains and clouds, Ren Han portrayed the fallen characters from Greek mythology on a black monument, symbolizing their falls. Among them, Icarus, who fell into the void while chasing the sun, evokes the increasingly prominent contradiction between humans and technology: the impasse of human civilization caused by humanity's inability to control the rapidly advancing technology.

The artist carved "Roller Pigeons" on the carriers of civilization—books—to freeze a series of performances where pigeons "act out" the process of falling. The imbalance of pigeon flight is directed into stability through artificial means, confirming to us that premeditating, producing, and appreciating the "fall" is part of our visual tradition. In this series of falling performances, we can't help but wonder: is the ground we refer to really so solid? What if it is also falling? As Hito Steyerl said, "The whole society around you may be declining just like you."





Untitled(20f01)
carved old books
2020
Yishu 8 chez Tante Martine, Paris(FR)



detail



Untitled (23f127)
carved old books
54 x 44 x 26 cm
2023



TOUT SUR LES ANIMAUX
LES VÉGÉTAUX
LES MINÉRAUX

LA NATURE

**RUSTICA
1928**

**RUSTICA
1929**

LAROUSSE

La vie
des animaux



G. M. VILLENAVE

LA CHASSE

LAROUSSE

Untitled (Roller #4)
carved old books
30.5 x 34 x 22.5 cm
2022



Untitled (Roller #3)
 carved old books
 35 x 25.5 x 17.5 cm
 2022



Untitled (Roller #1)
 carved old books
 38 x 24 x 18 cm
 2022



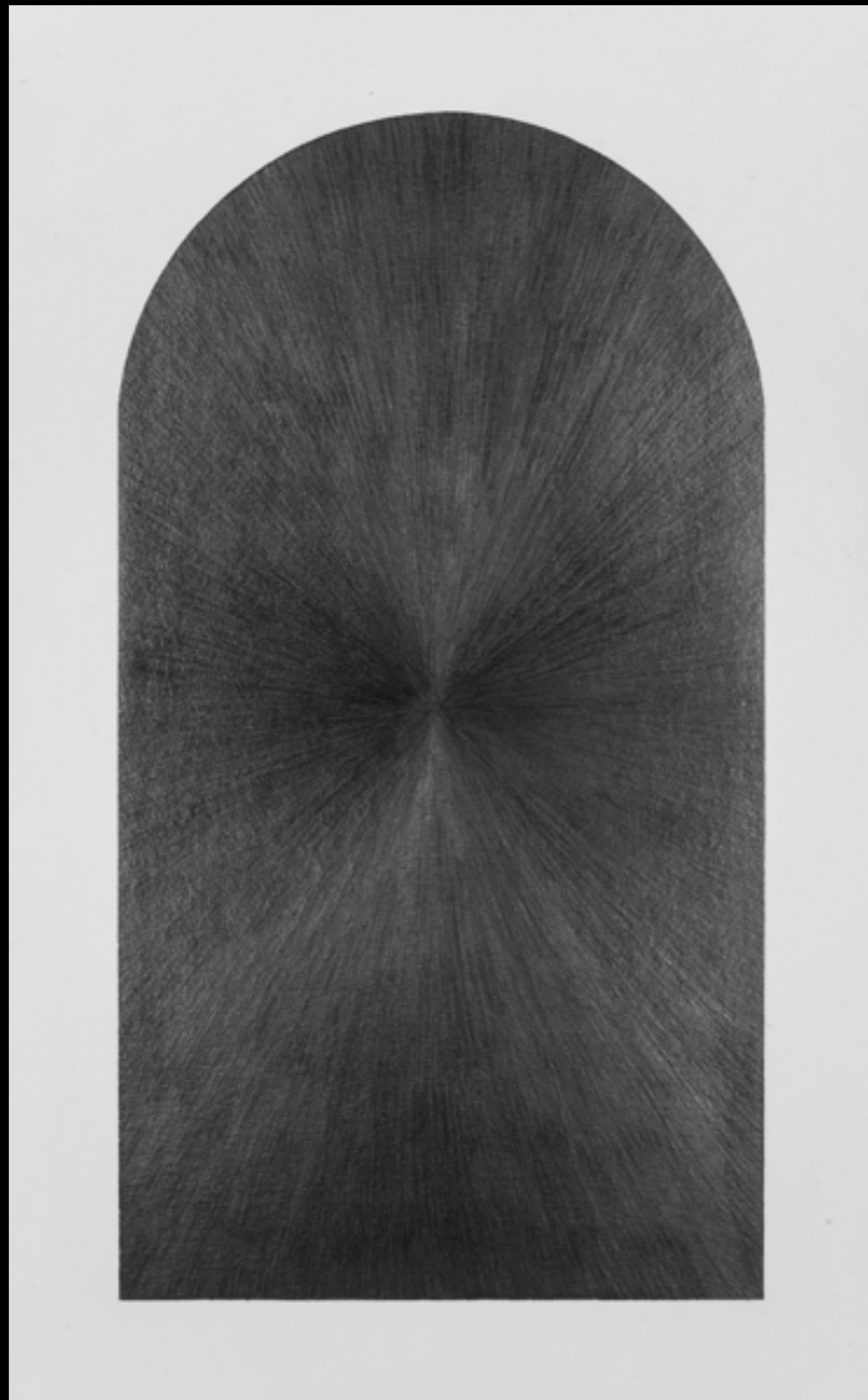
Untitled (13a01) detail
wall debris, wood frame, hole in the wall
2013
Zibo(CN)

Parergon

Parergon is an ancient Greek term that literally means “beside the work.” In painting, it can refer to the frame, decorations, signature, and even the wall or space where the painting is displayed. Jacques Derrida discusses in 'The Truth in Painting' that parergon is a simple boundary of the work (ergon), being both intrinsic to and transcending it. Through the discussion of this term, Derrida unfolds a series of deconstructivist analyses of the boundaries of painting. Ren Han's artistic methodology is influenced by Derrida, questioning the traditional conception of art as form and meaning, and re-examining elements such as the frame, materiality, and space of drawing, viewing drawing as a tool for thought.

In his site-specific work “Untitled 13a01,” Ren Han outlines the temporary passage between two buildings with a golden frame, making the walking viewers the main subject. In his 'Mirror' series, he uses graphite pencils to continuously polish and transform frame-less ready-made mirrors into replicas with dark gray reflective surfaces. Using familiar drawing materials, he changes our way of viewing drawings, leading us into a contemplative dimension with the interplay of light and depth.

Beyond the “frame,” Ren Han's numerous installations and site-specific works reflect his exploration of the physical and spatial dimensions of drawing. The only attribute retained in his works is the core characteristic of drawing—traces of movement. The artist's body engages in seemingly simple yet exhausting tasks. In the history of human's attempts to reach spiritual enlightenment through means of physical distress and exhaustion including sensory deprivation and the mortification of the flesh, they do so to cease conscious thoughts. In Ren Han's practice of disciplining control and balance, his introspective efforts seem to take on similar effects. As Michael Allen Gillespie writes in *Nihilism Before Nietzsche*, “Man stands between nature and the divine, and is pulled by powerful forces in opposite directions.” To Ren Han, he stands between these dualities and attempts to carve a pathway connecting the two.



Mirror no.13
Pencil drawing on paper mounted on wooden board
52 x 32 cm
2014



Mirror no.16
Pencil drawing on paper mounted on wooden board
88 x 57.5 cm
2015



Labyrinth #1
steel joist, plasterboard, putty, pencil
250 x 600 x 10 cm, 250 x 600 x 10 cm, 250 x 360 x 10 cm
2010
Villa Arson, Nice(FR)



Soft Impact
spray-paint, fragments and objects from the site, assaulting the wall
2013
Tianjin(CN)
photo by Geng Han

CV

1984 Born in Tianjin(CN)
Lives and works in Paris(FR)

Educations

2011 MFA(DNSEP) With Honors, Art Department,
École Nationale Supérieure d'Art de Nice, Villa Arson(FR)
2006 BA, Oil Painting Department,
Academy of Fine Arts Tianjin(CN)

Awards

2019 Artist Fellowship, Ministry of Culture, Department of Hauts-de-Seine, City of Montrouge(FR)
2017 The Rock Award, Wang Shikuo Award, Today Art Museum, Beijing(CN)

Residencies

2024 A4 Residency Art Center, Chengdu(CN)
2023 PARADISE AIR, Matsudo, Japon(JP)
Nouvel Institut Franco-Chinois, Lyon(FR)
2020 Yishu 8 Chez Tante Martine, Paris(FR)

Solo Exhibitions (Selection)

2023 *The Myth of The Absurd*, Galerie Met, Berlin(DE)
Inferno & Elysium, Musée du Nouvel Institut Franco-Chinois, Lyon(FR)
2022 *After All That Fell*, Zeto Art, Paris(FR)
2020 *Bibliothèque de Ren Han*, Yishu 8 Chez Tante Martine, Paris(FR)
2017 *Void and Ashes*, Qi Mu Space, Beijing(CN)
2016 *Mirror Image*, C-Space, Beijing(CN)
2014 *Emulating Nature*, C-Space, Beijing(CN)

Group Exhibitions (Selection)

2024 *Sailing Home*, Zhoushan Art Museum, commissioned by UCCA Lab, Zhoushan(CN)
Dreamland-Homeland, Carte Blanche - Winland Center, Hangzhou(CN)
RE-CREATE Residency Art Season, A4 Residency Art Center+CPI, Chengdu(CN)
Burning Glowing Flickering(Brennen Glühen Flirren), Artburst+Erstererster, Berlin(DE)
A Perpetual Way: A Century of Art Between China and France, Ferment Art Center, Shenyang(CN)
2022 *A Crack In The Wall*, Asia Now, Zeto Art, Monnaie de Paris, Paris(FR)
2021 *Symbiose*, Asia Now, Zeto Art, Paris(FR)
2020 *A Kind of Form*, Song Art District, Beijing(CN)
2019 *A Ten Year*, OWSPACE X Taikang Space, Aranya(CN)
64e Salon de Montrouge, Le Beffroi, Montrouge(FR)
2017 *A New Collection of Poetry*, AMNUA, Nanjing(CN)
Amassing Force – 2017 Wang Shikuo Award, Today Art Museum, Beijing(CN)
2016 *Puzzles*, OCAT Xi'an, Xi'an(CN)
Ghost in Flash: After Photography, Taikang Space, Beijing(CN)
2015 *JIMEI x ARLES International Photo Festival*, Xiamen(CN)
24 Art Project – Naissance, Today Art Museum, Beijing(CN)
2014 *Everyday Anxiety – the 5th Jinan International Photography Biennial*, Jinan(CN)
Look Into the Far Horizon, Musée des Arts Asiatiques, Nice(FR)
2012 *New Directions: Young Chinese Contemporary Artists*, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow(RU)
2011 *Jeune Création 2011*, Centquatre, Paris(FR)
Demain C'est Loin, Galerie de la Marine and Villa Arson, Nice(FR)

Commissions

2024 ARCTERYX, invited by UCCA Lab, site-specific installation, ARCTERYX Museum, Shanghai(CN)
2017 YUNHAIYAO, site-specific installation, Kunming(CN)

Stock

Philippe Saint Marc
Socialisation de

Jean Teulé Je, François Villon

CHRISTINE
DE RIVOYRE

CHARLES
MORGAN

Le petit
matin

SPARKENBROKE

« Romantic Vandalism »
— Mathieu Mercier

Acknowledgements

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Julliard

Grasset

STOCK
PARIS

GALLIMARD