

ROTWAND

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**Mikko Rikala**

Documentation

## Artist statement

“My artistic approach examines the tension between “seeing”, equatable with the realm of physics and its sizeable dimensions as a form of rational knowledge, and “perceiving”, a conscious moment of subjective experience that presents a form of potentially irrational knowledge.

Exercising methods of “meditative repetition” and patterning, arrangement and decomposition, my work systematically juxtaposes and breaks up processual, relative movements of linear time and circular time. Structures of disintegration and decay, as indicators of the inevitable, progressive passage of time, and, likewise, transitional phenomena of recurring, self-renewing character, as signifiers of the cyclical and interstitial passage of time, are elementary themes in my works. Visual motifs are taken both from the natural and man-made world, man-made being physically built or conceptual. They coexist as fragments without structural hierarchy.

To lessen the domination of the visual field of perception, through which I am still mainly composing my work, I have used myself as a tool through which I measure and contemplate, not so much the nature of things, but that which surpasses rational thought. By drawing distances I have been able to feel slowness through my body and mind. Walking in a city with a memory of the sea in my pocket I have visualised the nature of our ability to blur boundaries between the fact and fiction. These are acts of expanding the horizon of knowledge through the experience of the relativity of time, speed, distance, presence and absence.

Art historical connections to minimalism and conceptualism provide a framework for the ideas on how I create a visual piece of work. Sol LeWitt asked for the irrational thought to be followed absolutely and logically. Likewise rational thoughts can be followed irrationally. My methods, techniques and concepts vary, but the core question is the same: What are the possibilities of Man to observe and understand the world beyond the rational mind? The ultimate incentive is to transcend the limitations of human reason and intellect, and in turn conceive and make graspable that what we feel is the unthinkable, unimaginable beyond the incommensurable space.”

Mikko Rikala



*Emptiness Ceases to be Blue*  
Installation view, solo show at Rotwand, Zurich, Switzerland, 2016



*Emptiness Ceases to be Blue*  
Installation view, solo show at Rotwand, Zurich, Switzerland, 2016

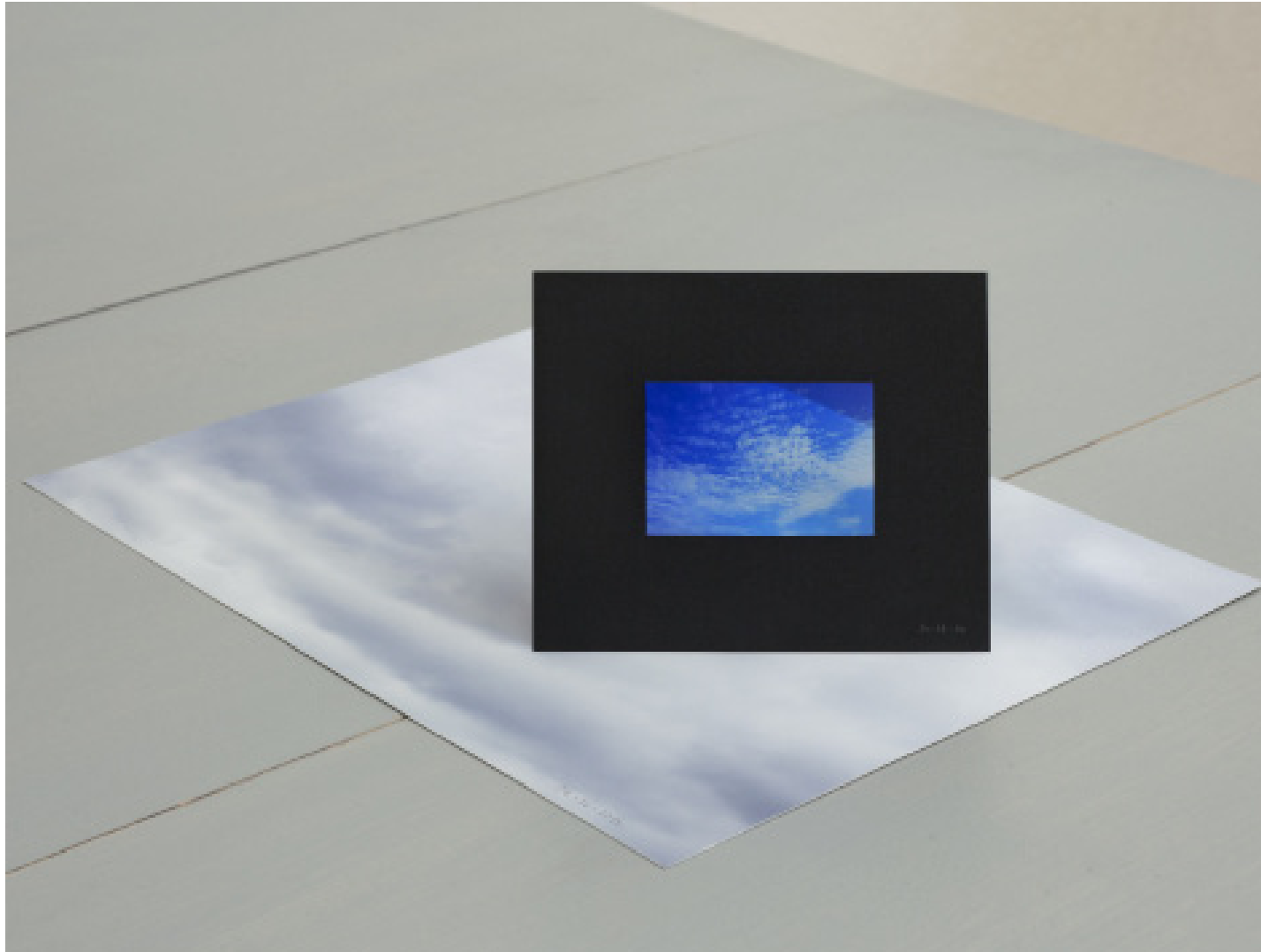


*Emptiness Ceases to be Blue*  
Installation view, solo show at Rotwand, Zurich, Switzerland, 2016



*I have Seen the Horizon Through the Mist of My Breath (winter) is a picture of the artist's breath against the horizon. Rikala has drawn the horizon by hand on the picture to make it visible.*

*I Have Seen the Horizon Through the Mist of My Breath (winter), 2016*  
Pigment print, framed  
50 x 66 cm ( 19 5/8 x 26 inch )  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)



*Summer Sky on Autumn Sky* is the combination of two pictures from the artist's archive of images of clouds. The slide depicts the summer sky, the print the autumn sky. They are arranged in the way that the viewer sees the more recent image of the autumn sky through the older image of the summer sky. Thus, the order of an archival time is questioned, turned upside down and the transparent nature of an archive is highlighted.

*Summer Sky on Autumn Sky*, 2016  
Pigment print, framed  
30 x 40 cm ( 11 3/4 x 15 3/4 inch )  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)





*Water Equals Time* is an attempt to visualise “condensed time”. Taken at different time points, multiple photographs of the sea surface have been overlayered, and as a result, there are “too many” waves, too much information is overlapping and a slightly strange movement crosses the surface of the sea.

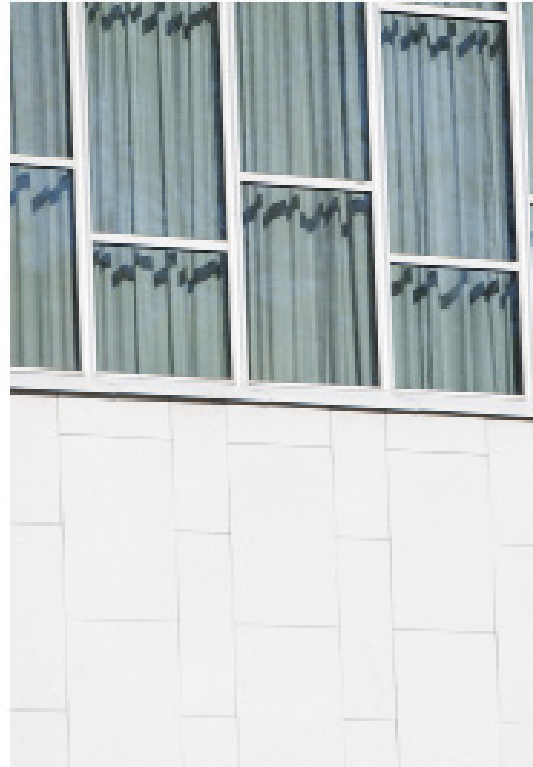
*Water Equals Time*, 2016  
Pigment print, framed  
80 x 100 cm (31 1/2 x 39 3/8 in)  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)





*Ephemeral Like a Stone (giant's kettle)* shows a geological phenomenon where water and small rocks together have formed sort of a hole into the bigger stone.

*Ephemeral Like a Stone (giant's kettle)*, 2016  
Pigment print, framed  
40 x 55 cm ( 15 3/4 x 21 5/8 inch )  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)



*Shadow of a Bird on Marble* is an interplay between the heavy and the light. Marble and shadow, the solid and the intangible are juxtaposed over a modernistic facade.

*Shadow of a Bird on Marble*, 2016  
Pigment print, framed  
40 x 30 cm ( 15 3/4 x 11 3/4 inch )  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)



*Empty Scan 4 (light glaucous blue), 2016*  
Wall paper  
Dimensions variable  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)



*Empty Scan 4 (dark tyrian blue)*, 2016  
Pigment print, framed  
100 x 80 cm  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)



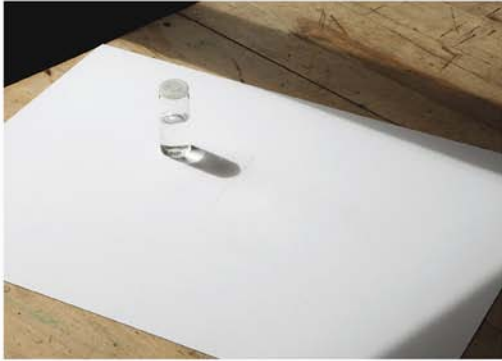
The installation *Emptiness Ceases to be Blue* combines the works *Empty Scan 4 (dark tyrian blue)* and *Empty Scan 4 (light glaucous blue)*. The installation is based on the phenomenon that things/landscape tend to be blue when seen from a great distance. Therefore the smaller work is bluer as it is seen from a distance whereas the bigger one is nearer to the viewer because of its size. And still they exist simultaneously.

The colours are based on a combination system created by Sanzo Wada in Japan, first published in 1933-1934. He was among the first persons in Japan to experiment with western colour combination systems. He combined eastern sensibilities with western classification. The concept of combining colors was highly unusual in Japan.

By combining the Japanese system of colour combination with the images of empty scans is another attempt by the artist to try to „understand“ the potential of nothingness which does not really exist in western tradition of thoughts.

*Emptiness Ceases to be Blue*, 2016  
Installation  
Dimensions variable  
Installation view at Rotwand, 2016





*We Are Living on a Star* is playing with cosmic dimensions vs earthly dimensions. The length of a shadow is growing slightly due to the constant change of the angle between the sun and the earth while the earth is moving through space. The two images were taken 2 months apart, at exactly the same time of day.

07.09.2016  
14.00  
07.09.2016  
14.00

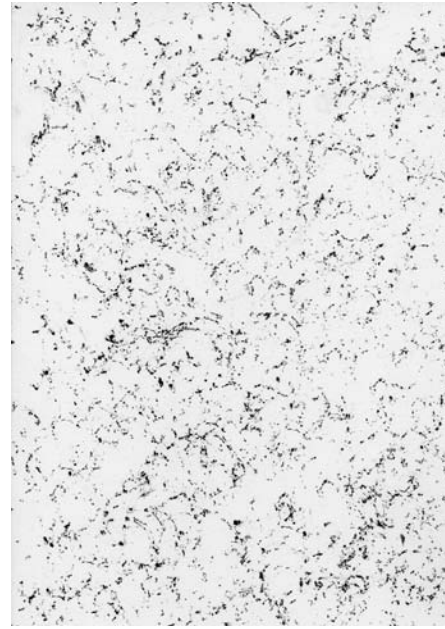
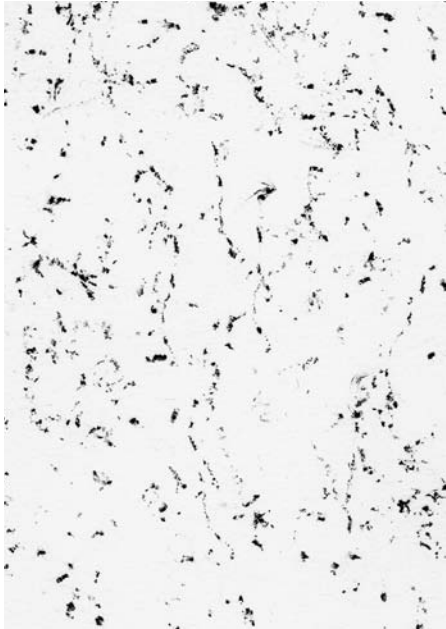
*We Are Living on a Star*, 2016  
Pigment print, framed  
72 x 55 cm (28 3/8 x 21 5/8 in)  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)



*Constellation (Movement of a Stone, 15 minutes)* is an original drawing created by rolling a stone for 15 minutes on a carbon paper which was placed on top of a paper. The artist did similar works using times inspired by the Fibonacci time frames: 15 min, 15 min, 30 min, 45 min, 1 h 15 min, 2 h

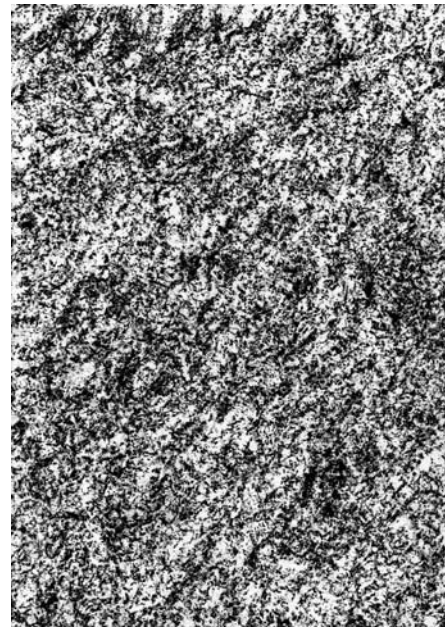
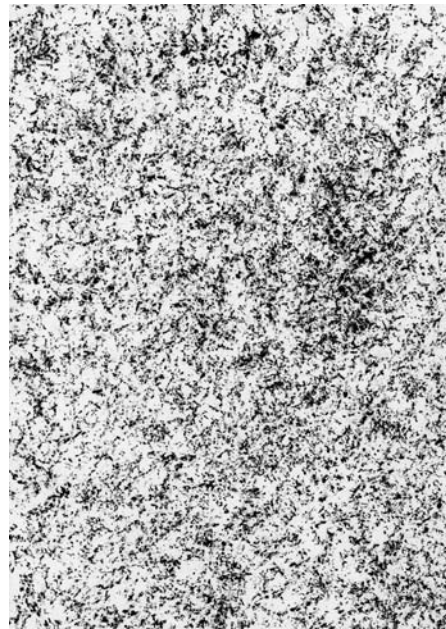
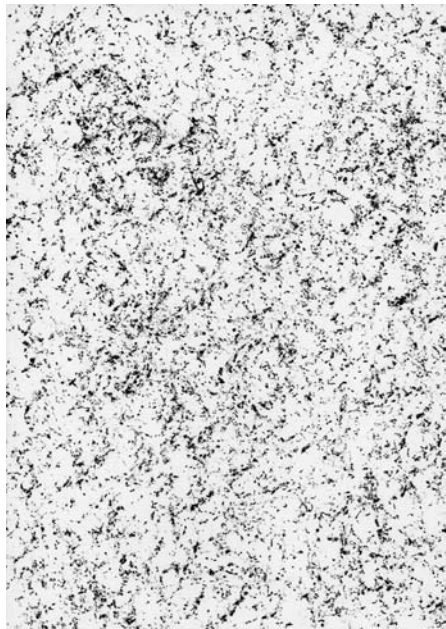


*Constellation (Movement of a Stone, 15 min, 15 min, 30 min, 45 min, 1 h 15min, 2 h)*  
Carbon paper drawings with a stone, framed  
30 x 24 cm ( 11 3/4 x 9 1/2 inch ), each  
Unique  
Installation view at Rotwand, 2016



*Constellation*  
*(Movement of a Stone), 2016*  
32 x 24 cm (12 5/8 x 9 1/2 in), each

15 min  
15 min  
30 min



*Constellation*  
*(Movement of a Stone), 2016*  
32 x 24 cm (12 5/8 x 9 1/2 in), each

45 min  
1 h 15 min





*Waves Are too Soft to Break* is an underexposed photograph of a sea surface with waves. Closer inspection reveals film grains on the surface. The boundaries between sea and sand begin to blur and remind us of the nature of waves.

*Waves are too soft to break*, 2016  
Pigment print, framed  
100 x 80 cm  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)



*Revealed by a Wind*, is another image about the nature of waves. Here, wind has given the form of waves to sand. It feels like we are looking on an archaeological site and shows the wind's ability to reveal things. Something solid is revealed through something intangible.

*Revealed by a Wind*, 2016  
Pigment print, framed  
60 x 75 cm  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)

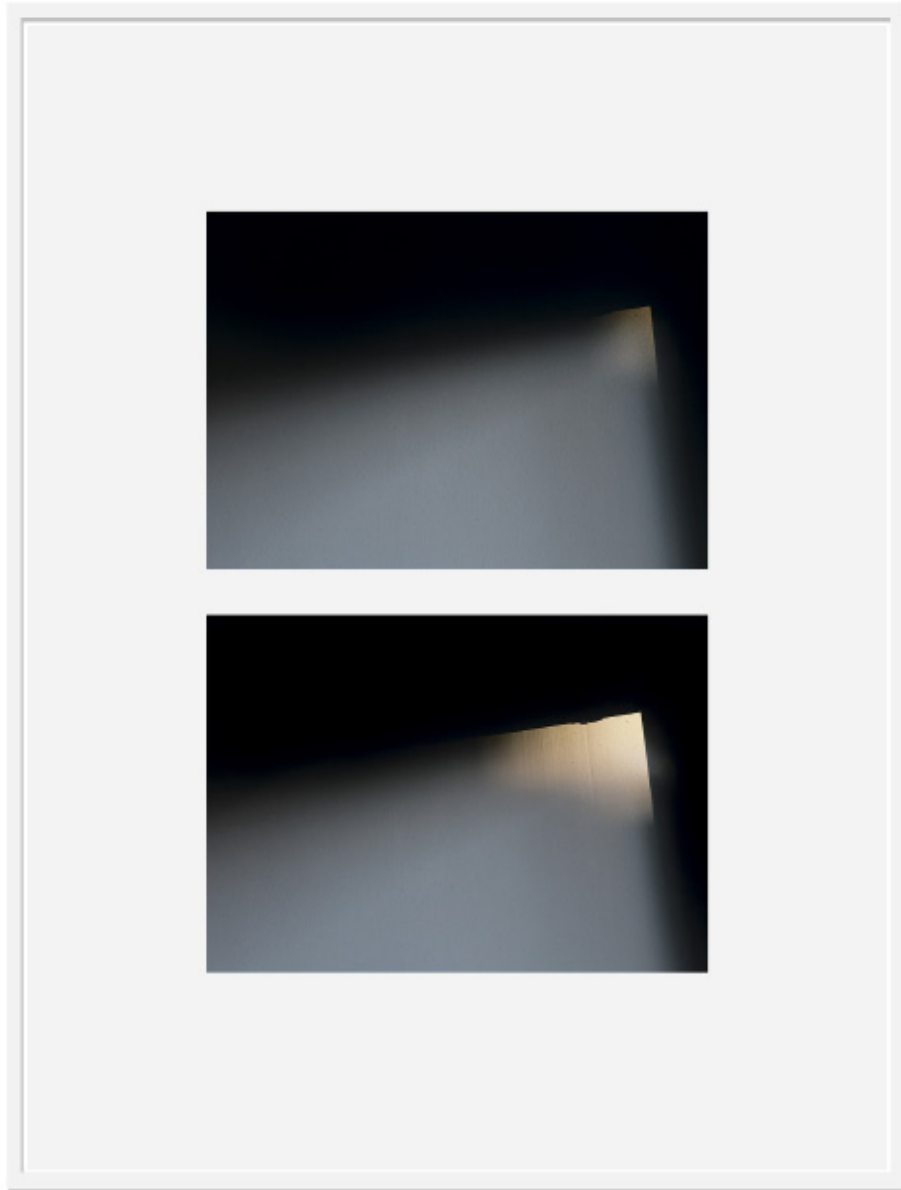


*Study of Variation (solidity/fluidity)* visualizes an „in between the process“, where water changes it's form from solidity to fluidity. Interestingly, water is the only element that is lighter when it is solid than liquid. Studying variation through the transformation of water allows the artist to connect this phenomenon to cyclical movement, as water frequently changes between those two forms.

*Study of Variation (solidity/fluidity)* is as much a study of the cyclical nature of variation as it is a study of material differences and their consequences.

*Study of Variation (solidity/fluidity)*, 2016  
Pigment print, framed  
30 x 40 cm ( 11 3/4 x 15 3/4 inch )





*Morning is Evening in Reverse* shows two pictures where the first sunrays in the morning are hitting through a window on a wall. It depicts the increasing of light caused by the rotation of the Earth and thus reveals the cyclical nature of life.

*Morning Is Evening in Reverse*, 2016  
Pigment print, framed  
72 x 55 cm  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)





Seen from a distance, *On the Verge of Materiality (noise wall)* seems to be just the visualisation of noise. At closer look, one realises that the image depicts actually a solid wall made of small stones. Looking and moving in space changes the way the viewer sees and perceives the content of the work, it creates a balance between emptiness (noise) and solidity (stone wall).

*On the Verge of Materiality (noise wall)*, 2016  
Wall paper  
Dimensions variable  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)





Structures of disintegration and decay, as indicators of the inevitable, progressive passage of time, and, likewise, transitional phenomena of recurring, self-renewing character, as signifiers of the cyclical and interstitial passage of time, are elementary themes in Rikala's works. Visual motifs are taken both from the natural and man-made world, man-made being physically built or conceptual.

*Temporal Realm* shows a material variation, the transformation of asphalt over time. Asphalt, a human made product, is made partly of stones. The transformation seen in this image is from the human made material back to the natural, as asphalt partly falls apart and turns back into stones.

Unlike the cyclical movements of material variations of different natural states, the direction in *Temporal Realm* is linear. This is true for almost any man-made things as long as the material turns again in a natural form. Therefore the name *Temporal Realm* could be associated to the nature of any man-made concept.

*Temporal Realm*, 2016  
Pigment print, framed  
90 x 70 cm ( 35 3/8 x 27 1/2 inch )  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)





*Ephemeral Like a Stone (pace counter)* is a picture of the stone Rikala carried in his hand during his long walks. While walking, the artist counted all his steps by tapping with his thumb on the stone. The small detri-tion in the stone derives from Rikala's thumb counting the steps.

*Ephemeral Like a Stone (pace counter)*, 2016  
Pigment print, framed  
19 x 25 cm ( 7 1/2 x 9 7/8 inch )  
Ediiton of 5 (+2 AP)



*Glacial Erratic* shows a glacial erratic stone from Finland, that has moved very slowly with huge ice masses during the last ice age. It has stood in its place ever since the ice has melted thousand of years ago. The picture comprises the slowness of movement and of enormous weight.

*Glacial Erratic*, 2016  
Pigment print, framed  
100 x 125 cm (39 3/8 x 49 1/4 in)  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)



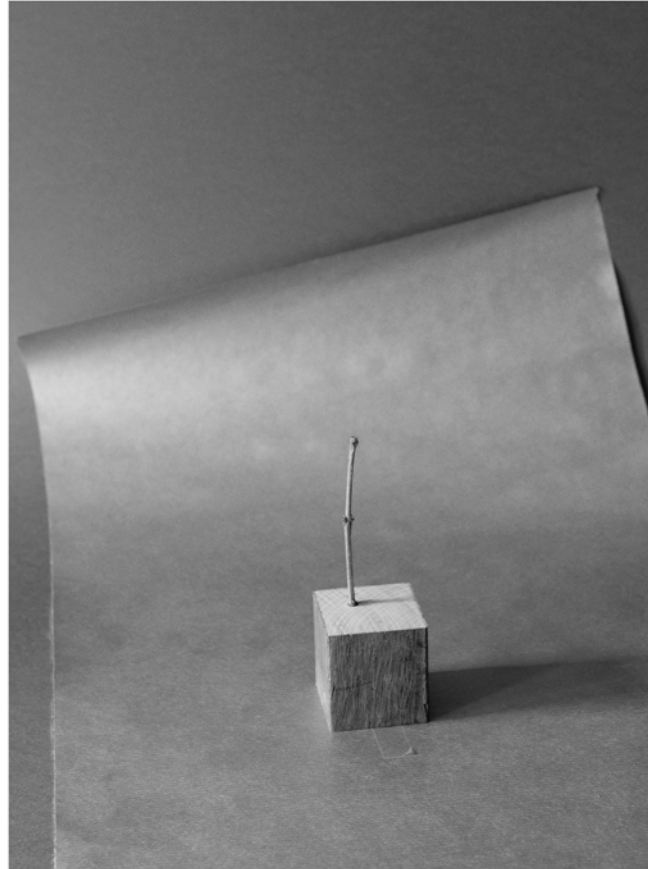
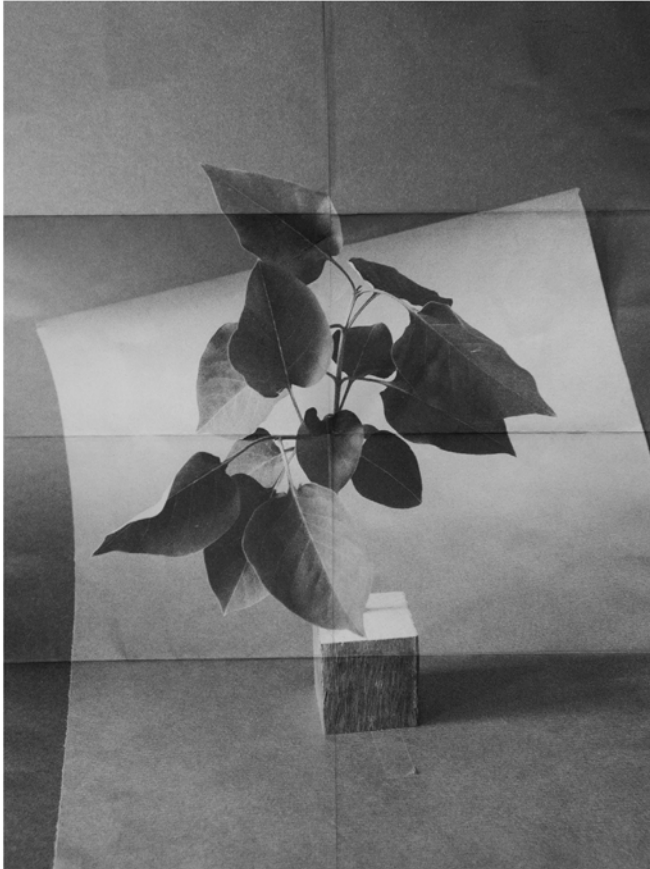
Rotwand at Art Rotterdam, 2016  
Installation view  
Photo credit: Mikko Rikala





Rotwand at Art Rotterdam, 2016  
Installation view  
Photo credit: Mikko Rikala





*A bit of a Branch (Passage Through Various Materials)* is an investigation on the behaviour of two different materials (nature vs paper) put under the same laws of entropy.

The picture on the left shows a branch on a worn out paper, the picture on the right a worn out branch on a good quality paper. The diptych reflects how time treats different materials put under the same laws of physics.

*A bit of a Branch (Passage Through Various Materials)*, 2015  
Pigment prints, framed  
Diptych  
70 x 52.4 cm (27 1/2 x 20 5/8 in), each  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)



*The Possibility of the Aleph*, 2015  
Pigment prints, framed  
Diptych  
34.6 x 27 cm (13 5/8 x 10 5/8 in), (left)  
29 x 21 cm (11 3/8 x 8 1/4 in), (right)  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)



*The Aleph*

~~by a madman, after first drinking some snifter of poison. Gortor~~  
burning clearly marked the deep-seated fear that I would be seen  
himself" in endless protest his delirium, in and out of his  
under from himself, he had to kill me. I felt a vague discomfort,  
which I tried to attribute to my rigidity, not to the operation of  
mastic. I closed my eyes, then opened them. It was then that I  
saw the Aleph.

~~how to write the infinite center of geometry, it is here that~~  
writer's hopelessness begins. Every language is an alphabet of  
symbols the employment of which assumes a post shared by its  
intellects. How can one transmit to others the infinite Aleph,  
which my timorous memory can scarcely contain? In a similar  
situation, mystics have employed a wealth of emblems: to signify  
the deity, a Persian mystic speaks of a bird that somehow is all  
birds; Alain de Lille speaks of a sphere whose center is everywhere  
and circumference nowhere; ~~which, of course, is with four faces,~~  
having a hundred and twenty-four sides. (It is not for nothing  
that I have named these inconceivable analogies, they become  
relative to the Aleph.) Perhaps the gods would not deny me the  
discovery of Gortor's madman, I found that the postcard I had  
purchased with literature, with Gortor. And besides, the central  
problem, the connection, even spatial connection, of Gortor  
is insoluble. In that unbounded moment, I saw millions  
of delightful and horrible scenes, masses of men, animals, the  
firm that all occupied the same point, without superposition and  
without complicity. What my eyes saw was similar to what I had  
seen in a moment, because language is succession. Something  
of Gortor, I will say.

~~Under the step, toward the night,~~ I saw a small iridescent sphere  
of almost unbearable brightness. At first I thought it was spinning;  
then I realized that the movement was an illusion produced by  
the dizzying spectacles inside it. The Aleph was probably two or  
three centimeters in diameter, ~~but it contained~~

The diptych *The Possibility of the Aleph* consists of a photograph of arranged pencil stubs and a page from the book „The Aleph“ by Jorge Luis Borges (1949) with some textlines crossed out by the artist.

In Borges story, the so-called „Aleph“ is a point from where all moments of world history can be seen from all possible perspectives. In a way, one could call it eternity, appearing through ones own imagination.

The letters on the pencil stub form the word „Aleph“ and the tips of the pencils are pointing to the center as well as to the margins of the image, towards nothing.

In combining the photograph and the reworked book page and by using ones imagination, the spectator might be able to create a picture that challenges the order of time and place.



*11th Kilometer* depicts 1 kilometer made of 1000 lines drawn by the artist on paper, each line measuring 100 cm.

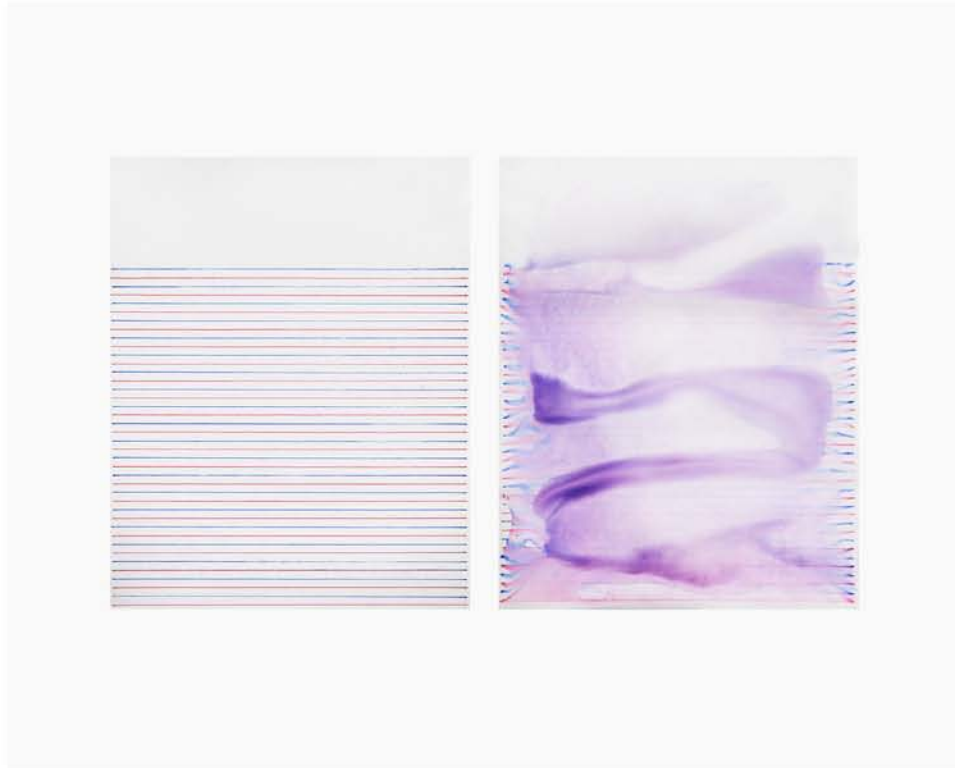
*11th Kilometer*, 2015  
Pencil on paper, framed  
Unique  
120 x 90 cm (47 1/4 x 35 3/8 in)





*Debris of Presence (11th km)* shows the remnants after sharpening the pencil which the artist used for drawing the work *11th Kilometer*.

*Debris of Presence (11th km)*, 2015  
Pigment print, framed  
52.8 x 40 cm (20 3/4 x 15 3/4 in)  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)



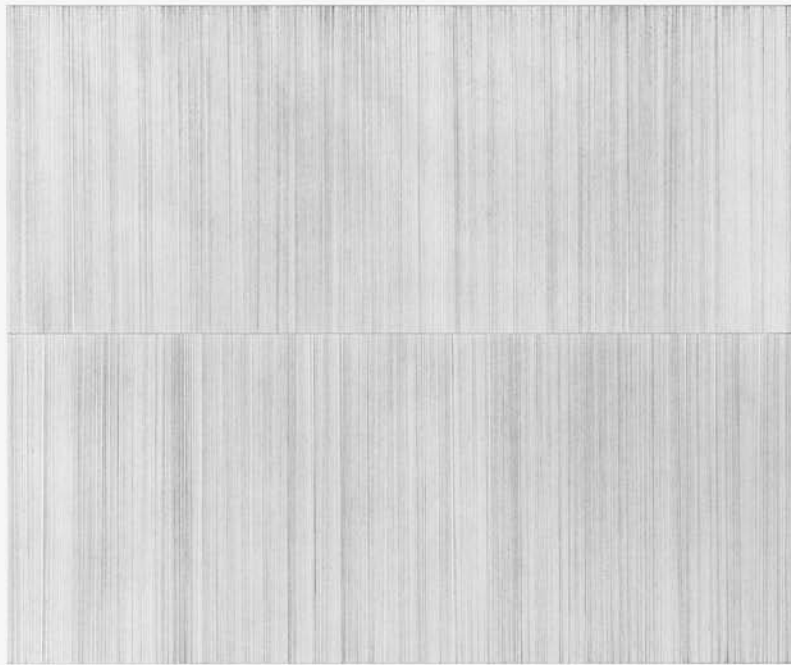
*Elementary Correspondence*, 2015  
Pigment print, envelope, framed  
Diptych  
55 x 70 cm (21 5/8 x 27 1/2 in), 22 x 30 cm (8 5/8 x 13 in)  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)

*Elementary Correspondence* is an imaginative observation of the nature of evaporation in a form of a letter/correspondence. The work consists of two photographs (letter) and an original envelope. The envelope shows a picture of a cloud instead of the receiver's address and the stamp depicts a picture of the ocean - by closer examination one recognizes a painting by Gerhard Richter. The whole setting suggests a movement from the ground to the sky, from the ocean to the clouds: evaporation. Referring to the color code of an airmail envelope the abstract letter consists of red and blue stripes only. Whereas one side of the letter is totally clear, the other is blurred by water. In a figurative sense, this is as a letter written by water and being sent to the clouds: *Elementary Correspondence*. A natural phenomena (evaporation) seems nothing but an exchange of letters between the ocean and the clouds.



*Towards Nothing*

Installation view: *6-10 km Towards Nothing, Debris of Presence/Studio View, Wanderer, Sea in my pocket*  
Solo show at Rotwand, Zurich, Switzerland, 2015



For the work *6-10 km Towards Nothing*, the artist was drawing several kilometers on paper by repeating a single ten centimeter line 50 thousand times.

The slowness of the gesture seems so very different from any other human physical activity – someone walking that slow would appear to stand still – its end destination diffuse, still tangible; a line leading to the next one, to eventually become a distance.

There, during this repetitious exercise, a meditative space, between the everyday world and the unthinkable, opened up to the artist and might do so to the viewer as well.

*6-10 km Towards Nothing*, 2013 (detail)  
Pencil on paper, framed  
40 x 30 cm (15 3/4 x 11 3/4 in)  
Unique

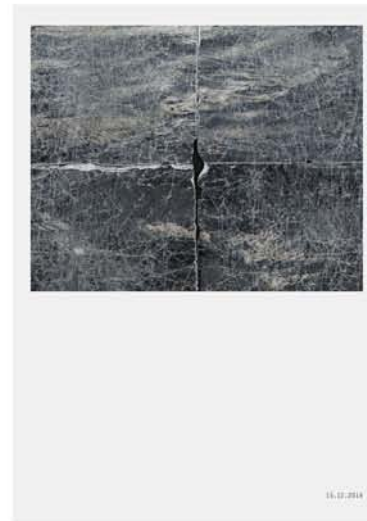
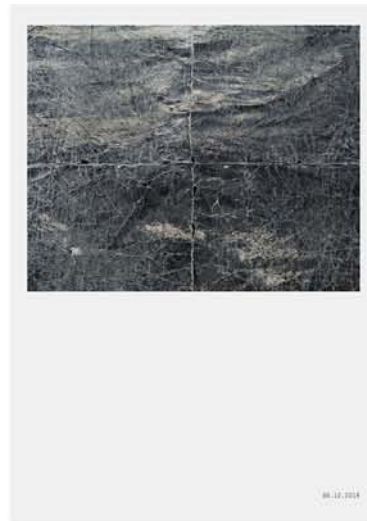
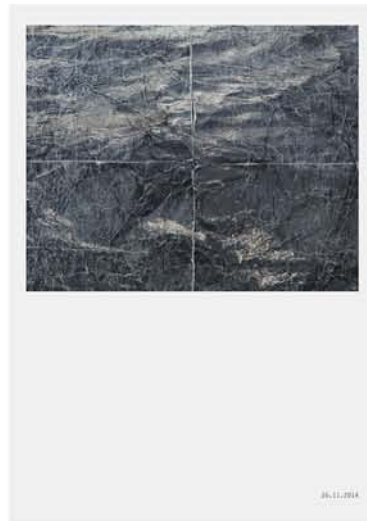
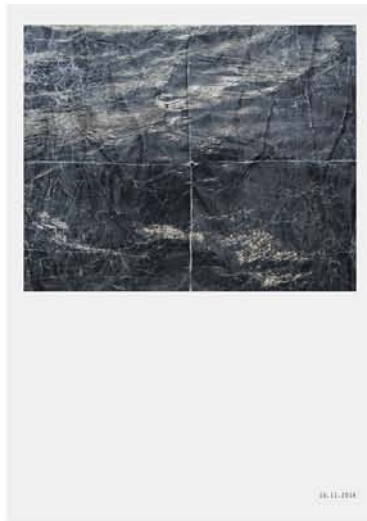
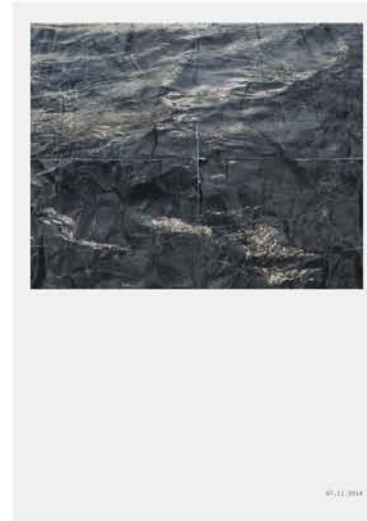
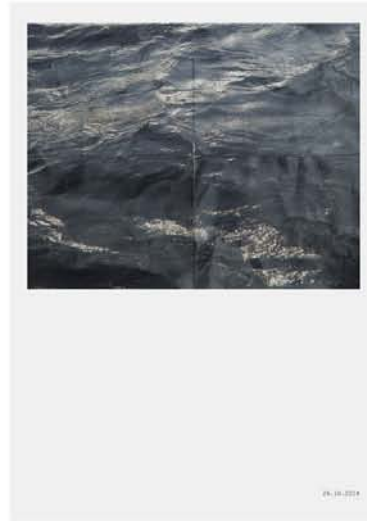
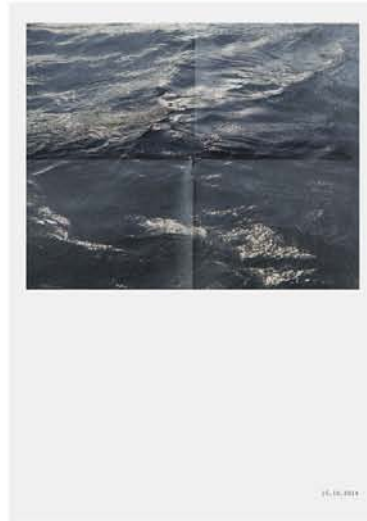
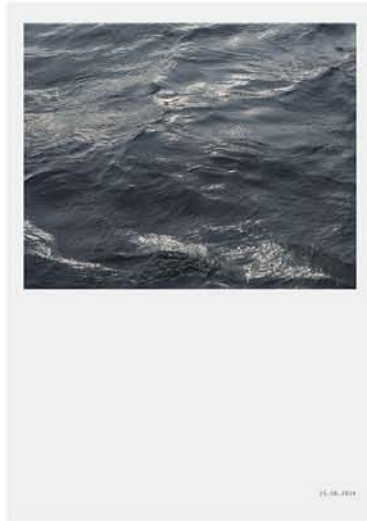




*Wanderer* shows a glass bottle filled with morning dew from the Finnish coast. Depending on temperature and solar irradiation, the dew drops change their pattern.



*Wanderer*, 2015  
Glass bottle, acrylic glass, paper, wood, morning dew  
30 x 38 x 19.2 cm (11 3/4 x 15 x 17 1/2 in)  
Edition of 2



For two months, the artist carried a folded image of a lake in Finland in his pocket. Approx. every ten days, he took it out to document the decomposition of the image. The different states of being make allusions to skin, granit, to the map of Berlin where the artist used to live, etc.

*Sea in my pocket*, 2014  
Pigment print on paper, framed  
110 x 135 cm (43 1/4 x 53 1/8 in)  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)



*Towards Nothing*

Installation view: *Three Forms of Decay/On relativity, Vernal Equinox/Summer Solstice*  
Solo show at Rotwand, Zurich, Switzerland, 2015



Madnes  
Norway



Lisbon  
Portugal



Bonadine  
Switzerland

*Three Forms of Decay*, 2013  
Pigment prints on paper, framed  
Triptych  
40 x 30 cm (15 3/4 x 11 3/4 in), each  
Edition of 6 (+2 AP)  
Comes together with *On relativity*, 2013



## VI THE ROCKS

In the archipelago of the Channel the coasts are almost everywhere wild. These islands have charming interiors but a stern and uninviting approach. Since the Channel is a kind of Mediterranean, the waves are short and violent and the tide has a lapping moment. Hence the ~~hills and mountains which the cliffs are subjected and the deep crevices of the coasts.~~ Shifting these coasts, you pass through a series of mirages. At every turn the rocks try to deceive you. Where do these illusions ~~come from? From the granite. It is very strange. You see huge stone towers, which have no doubt come out of the water to breathe. Giant men hasten on their way, heading for the horizon, the petrified folds of their sails have the form of the fleeing wind. Kings with Plutonian crowns meditate on massive thrones, over and under attack by the breakers. Nameless creatures buried in the rock stretch out their arms, showing the fingers of their spectral hands. All this is the formless and not. Draw nearer, and there is nothing there. Stone can sometimes disappear like this. Here there is a fortress, there a crudely shaped temple, elsewhere a chaos of dilapidated houses and dismantled walls, all the ruins of a deserted city. But there is no city there, no temple, no fortress, only the cliffs. As you draw closer or move further away, as you drift off or turn back, the coast falls to pieces. No kakiscope is quicker to disintegrate. The view breaks apart and re-forms; perspective plays its tricks. This block of rock is a tripod; then it is a lion; then it is an angel and unfolds its wings; then it is a seated figure reading a book. Nothing changes form so quickly as clouds, except perhaps rocks.~~

~~These forms call up the idea of grandeur, not of beauty. Far from it, they are sometimes unhealthy and hideous. These rocks have swellings and tumors and cysts and bruises and growths and warts. Mountains are the hump on the earth's surface. Madame de Staël, hearing Charlemburg, who had a rather high shouder, speaking lightly of the Alps, called it the "jealousy of the hunchback." The grand lines and ~~grandeur of nature, the hump of the sea, the silhouette of the mountains, the somber shades of the forests, the blue of the sky, are affected by some huge and mysterious dislocation mingled with these~~~~

*Three Forms of Decay / On relativity* consists of three photographs of three different stones and a page from the book „The Toilers of the Sea“ by Victor Hugo (1866) with some textlines crossed out by the artist.

The three stones represent three possible transformations of stones over time: through geological forces of the sea / mountains and man-made.

Together with Victor Hugo's text passage about a rock and how a change of perspective leads to a variety of different interpretations, the work *Three Forms of Decay / On relativity* challenges our way of perception.

*On relativity*, 2013

Pigment print on paper, framed

40 x 30 cm (15 3/4 x 11 3/4 in)

Edition of 6 (+2 AP)

Comes together with *Three Forms of Decay*, 2013



At vernal equinox, the artist cut out a piece of ice from a lake in Finland and put it in the fridge. Three months later, at summer solstice, he put it back again into the lake.

*Vernal Equinox/Summer Solstice*, 2013  
Pigment prints on paper, framed  
Dptych  
50 x 65 cm (19 5/8 x 25 5/8 in), each  
Edition of 6 (+2 AP)



*Cyclic Repetition*, 2013, installation view

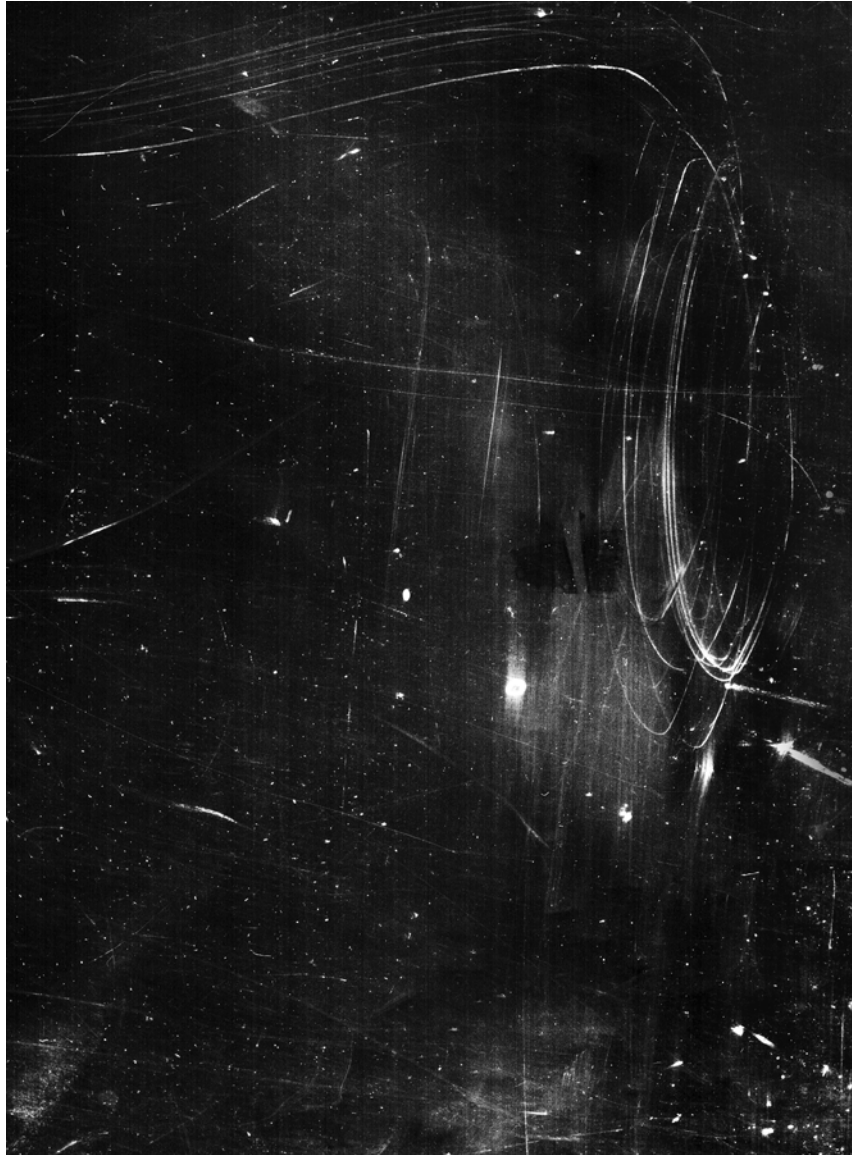
Pencil drawing, 45 x 65 cm (17 3/4 x 25 5/8 in), framed, unique (left)

Pigment print on paper, 30 x 20 cm (11 3/4 x 7 7/8 in), framed, edition of 6 (+2 AP) (right)



*Perpetual Swell*, 2013  
Pigment print on paper, framed  
50 x 65 cm (19 5/8 x 25 5/8 in)  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)





*Empty Scan 1, 2012*  
Pigment print on paper, framed  
61 x 45 cm (24 x 17 3/4 in)  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)



*Empty Scan 2, 2012*  
Pigment print on paper, framed  
61 x 45 cm (24 x 17 3/4 in)  
Edition of 5 (+2 AP)