

# POLISHED CITIES

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: THE FOLDED, THE ABYSMAL AND THE POLISHED.

Deleuze found in the fold the distinctive sign of the Baroque. Argullop undertook the same task for romanticism and understood that his trademark was found in the abysses, landscapes on a superhuman scale. More recently, Byung-Chul Han has gone out in search of the common trait of beauty in the present 21st century and has found it in the polished.

We are in an environment-world in which it is intended that objects offer no resistance to the eye or to the touch. Urban architecture and design are two of the privileged spaces in which it is possible to observe this phenomenon. But is this as new and idiosyncratic a phenomenon as Han understands it?

## THE METAPHOR OF WAR: THE GLACIS

With the appearance of firearms it became necessary to eliminate, from the surroundings of the cities, all those obstacles that were higher than that of a man on horse. The objective was to see more, to see better and further, to avoid being surprised by an ambushed enemy and, in the event of an attack, to be able to hit the target without difficulty. This fact conditioned the morphology of the cities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in which they tried to clean and flatten everything that was within the distance of a shot in the contour of their walls. The cities were then surrounded by an empty perimeter, where the projectiles could roll further and further, like bowling pins or rubber balls.

In a curious analogy, contemporary architecture also proposes conflict-free designs for common areas. Financial districts, bureaucratic buildings, squares and places of passage present today a morphology that tends to smoothness where - in the face of complexity, inequality and human mobility - conflicts seem to have been annulled. We inhabit, more and more, an endless glaxis, a glaxis that has lost its contours.

The streets and squares without ornament, minimalist, the facades without ornament and the absence of textures other than those of the smooth are, among others, the urban and architectural inertias of the last twenty years. An aesthetic not only perceived, but also and more importantly, desired. The image of the future that cinema and advertising had created is very similar to the new and institutional urban spaces.

## IMPORTANCE OF THE PROJECT

It is the analysis of a trend. An analysis based on the extraction and decontextualization of the fundamental components of this new architecture. The smoothness of the surfaces, the modular structures and the grids are, as will be seen, constant, all at the service of an aesthetic of non-friction in which the subjects - whoever walks, passes or stops - are extraordinarily easy to monitor, to the extent that any interruption in a smooth surface is quickly perceived. The builders of the ancient glaxis already knew.

## THE IMAGES

The images in this work function as fragments of a single city, portions of a contemporary city. The images -refined and minimal like the places they represent- work at the limit of figuration.

The shots that serve as an introduction come from economic and bureaucratic centers of different cities. Parts of buildings, advertising elements and security devices make up this first series.

Next, there is the polyptych titled The Stylite, where the pillars and columns that support the weight of financial buildings are its protagonists. By stripping them of their practical usefulness, they are reduced to their morphology: the passage from architecture to sculpture is thus taken. The title comes from the Christian religious of the fifth century famous for dedicating their lives to prayer and penance on top of pillars that, normally, were in the middle of the desert. This distanced them from the world and brought them closer to the kingdom of heaven.

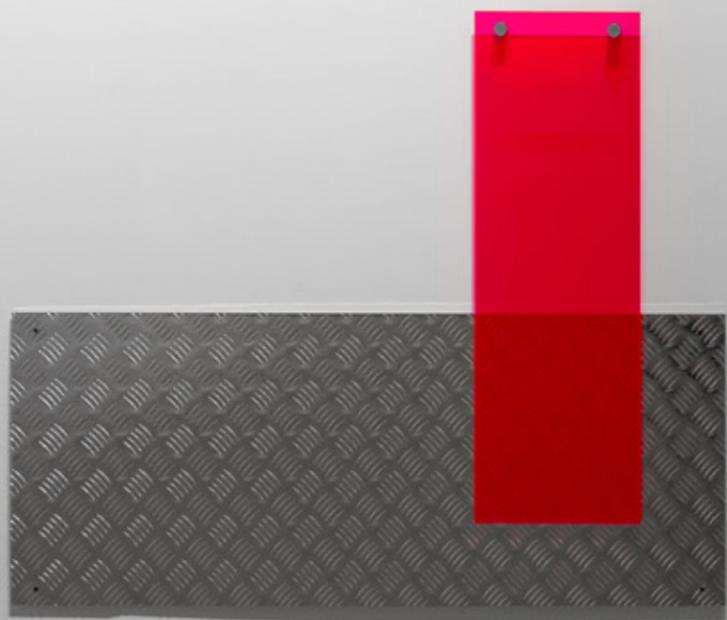
The third and last series is made up of various individuals who were photographed while admiring and portraying themselves in the same architectural environment. By appearing isolated, decontextualized and without scale, their gestures - common and strange - are underlined from a perspective that simulates that of surveillance cameras. The Observer serves as the title for this sequence.

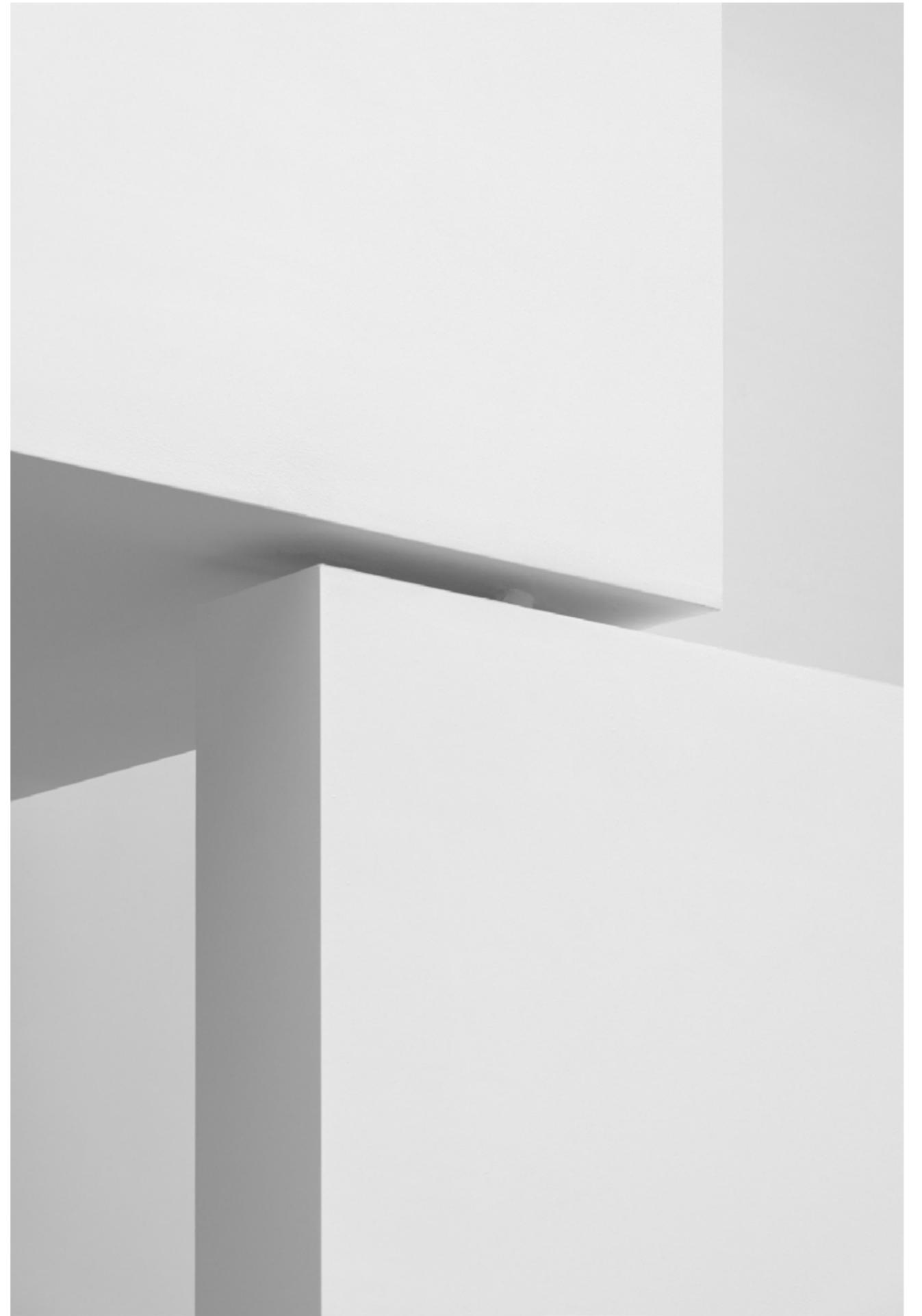
The sample participates in what it represents, hence the incorporation of constructive elements and artifacts that are superimposed on the images. The result is a whole that tends to be reticular and symmetrical.

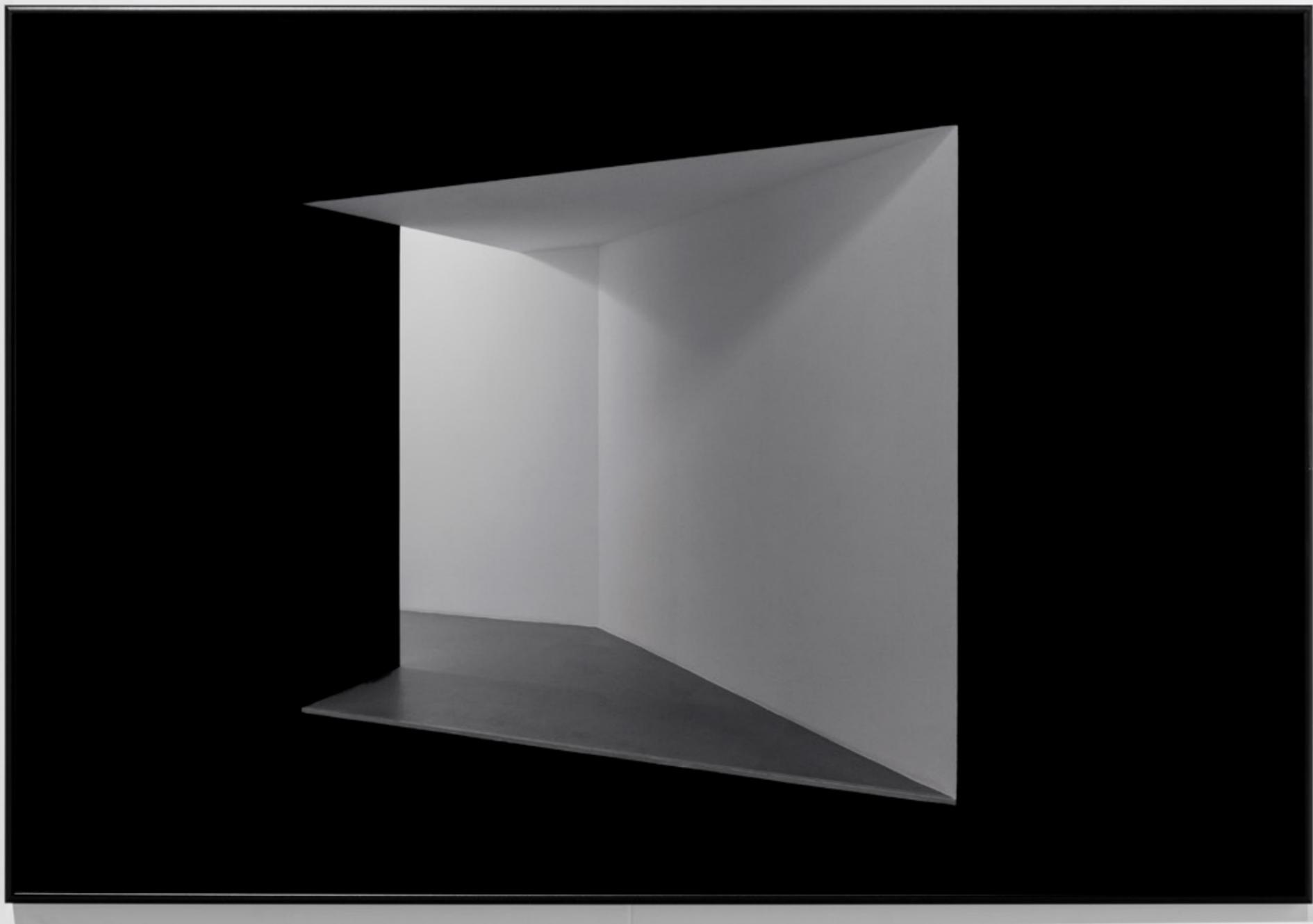


28 Piazza di Pietra Gallery. Rome (Italy), 2021.

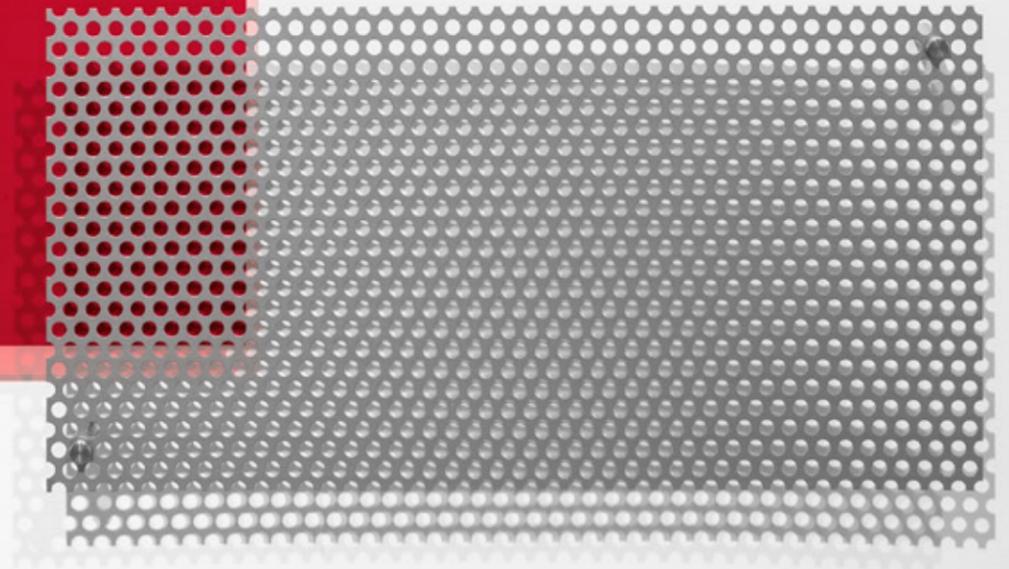




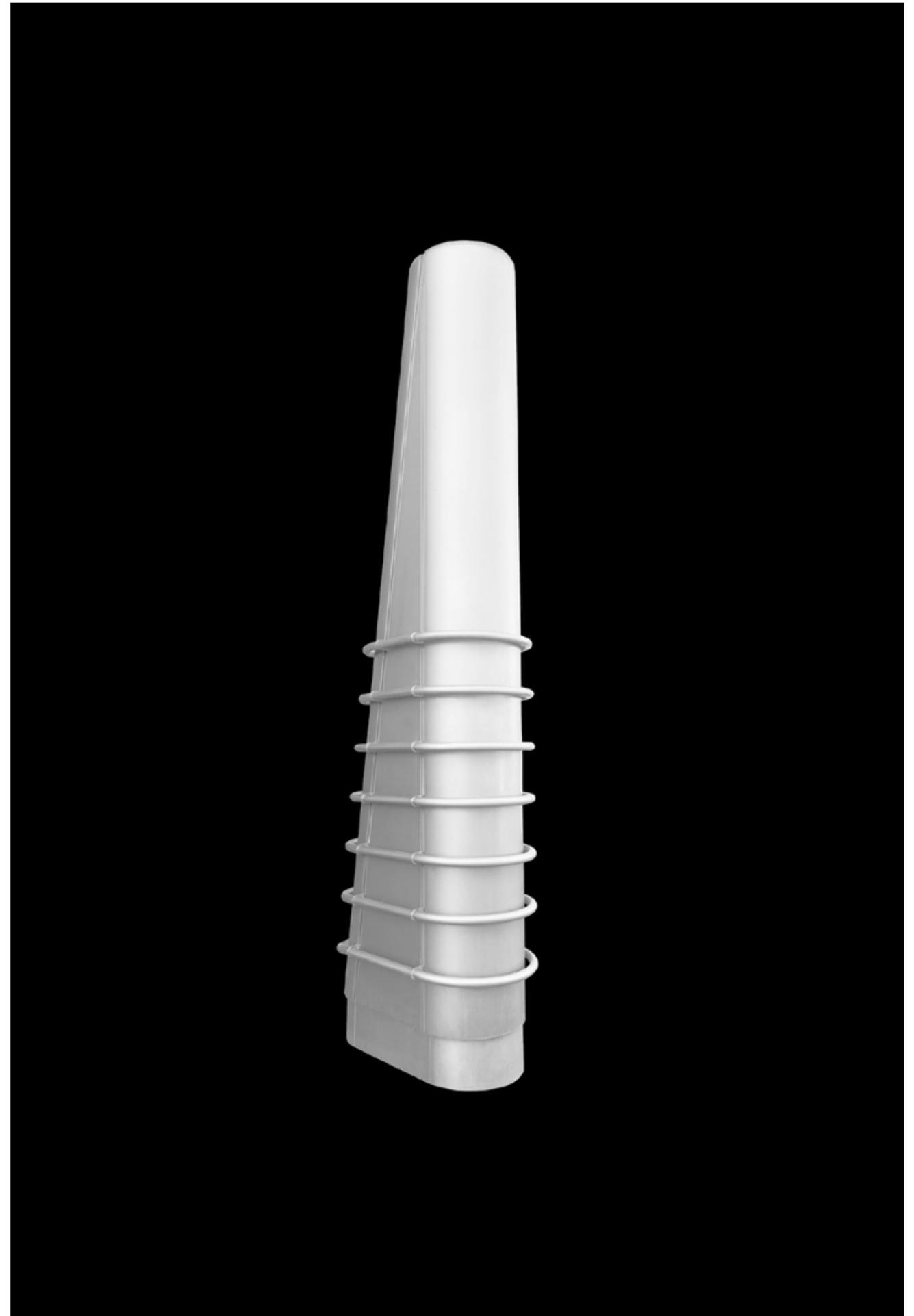
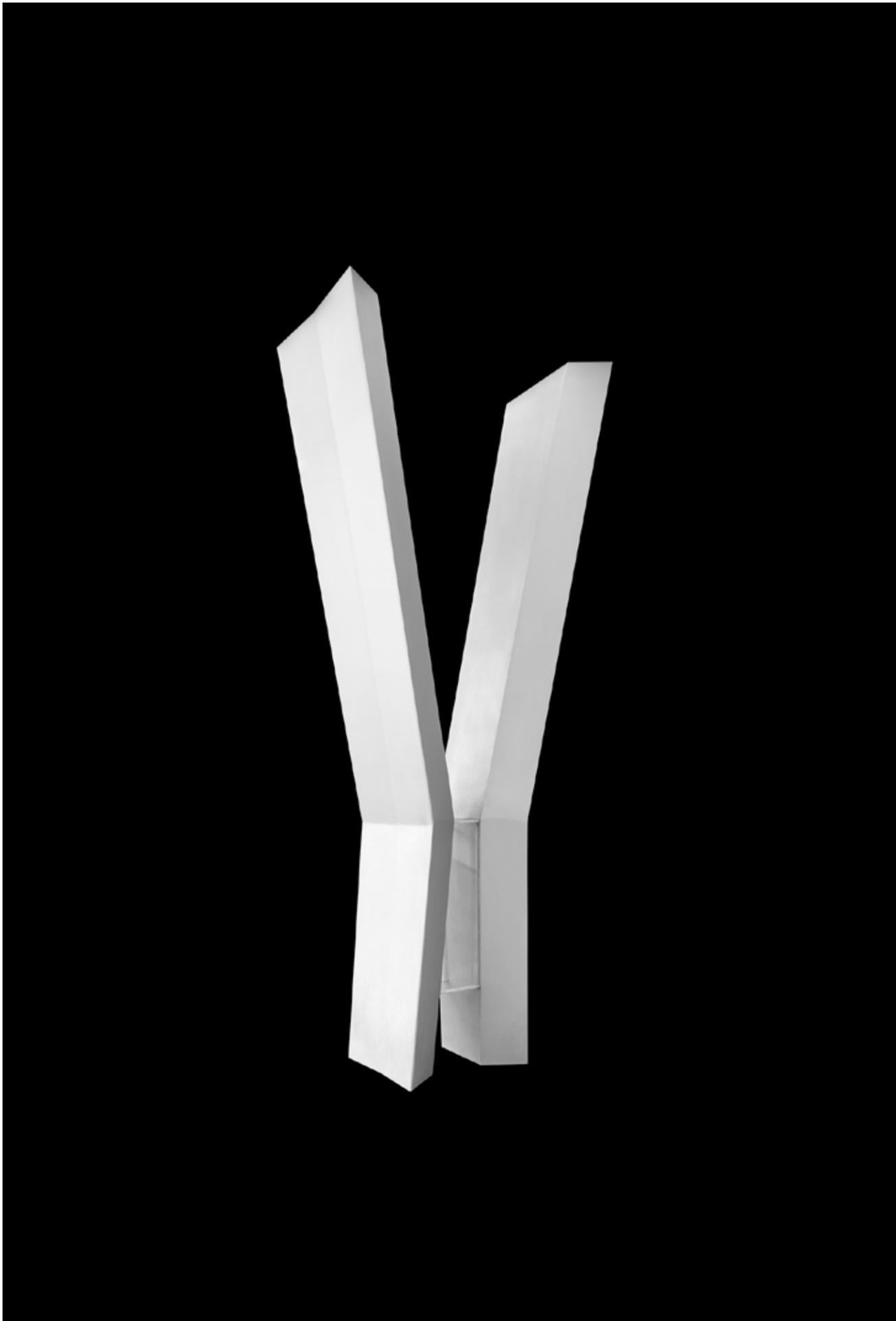












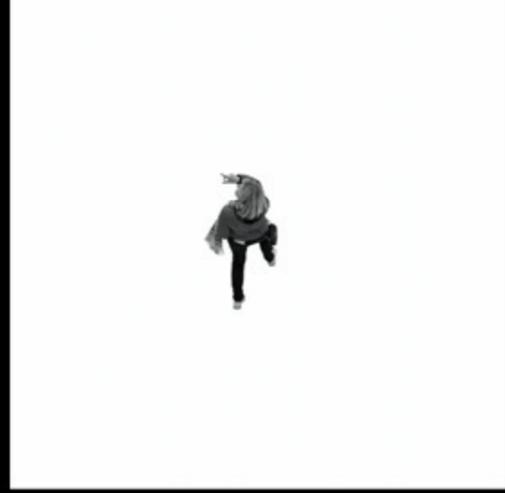
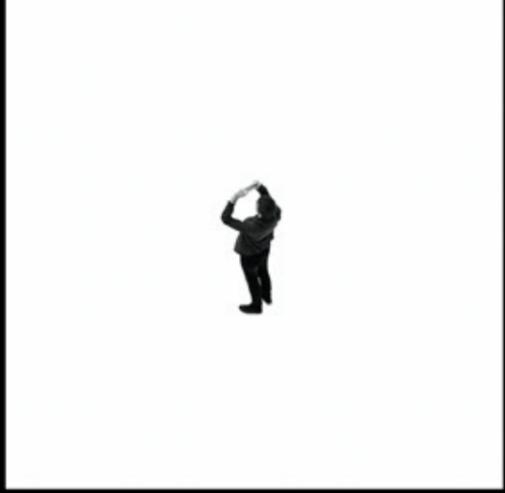
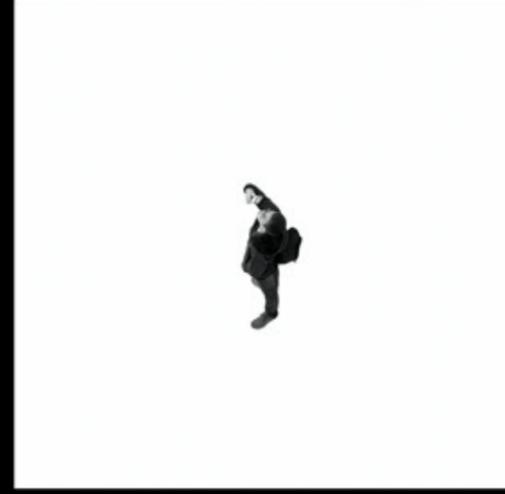
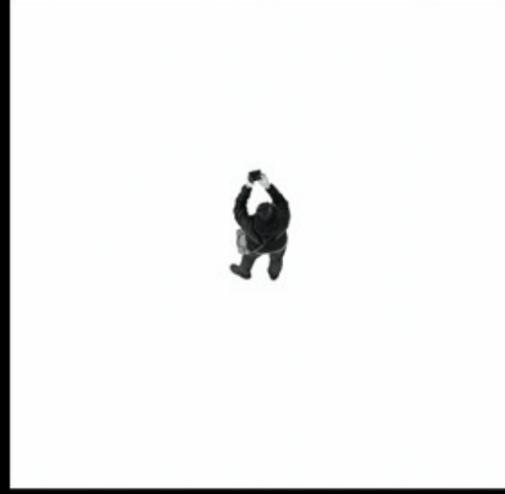
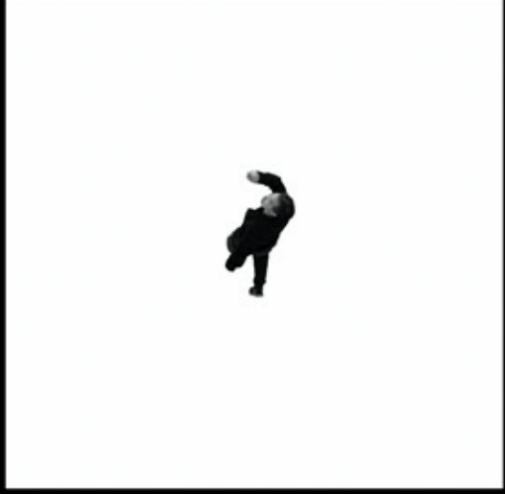
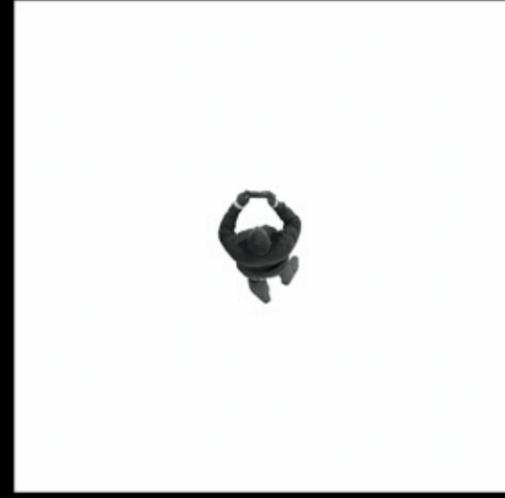
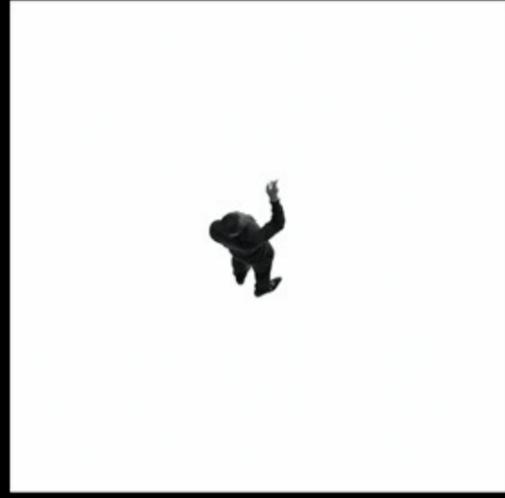




















My participation in the exhibition was kindly supported by OCA - Office for Contemporary Art Norway

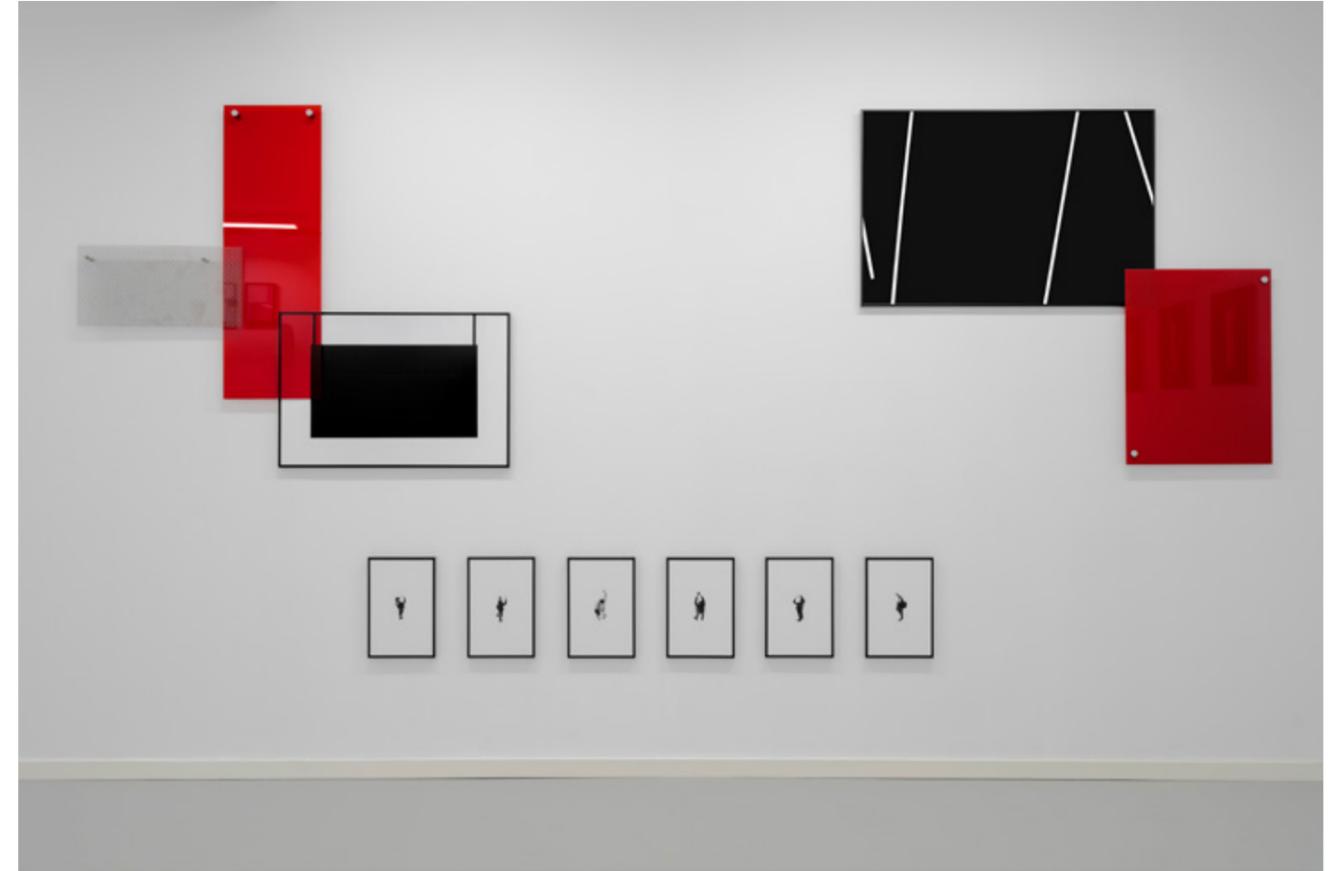
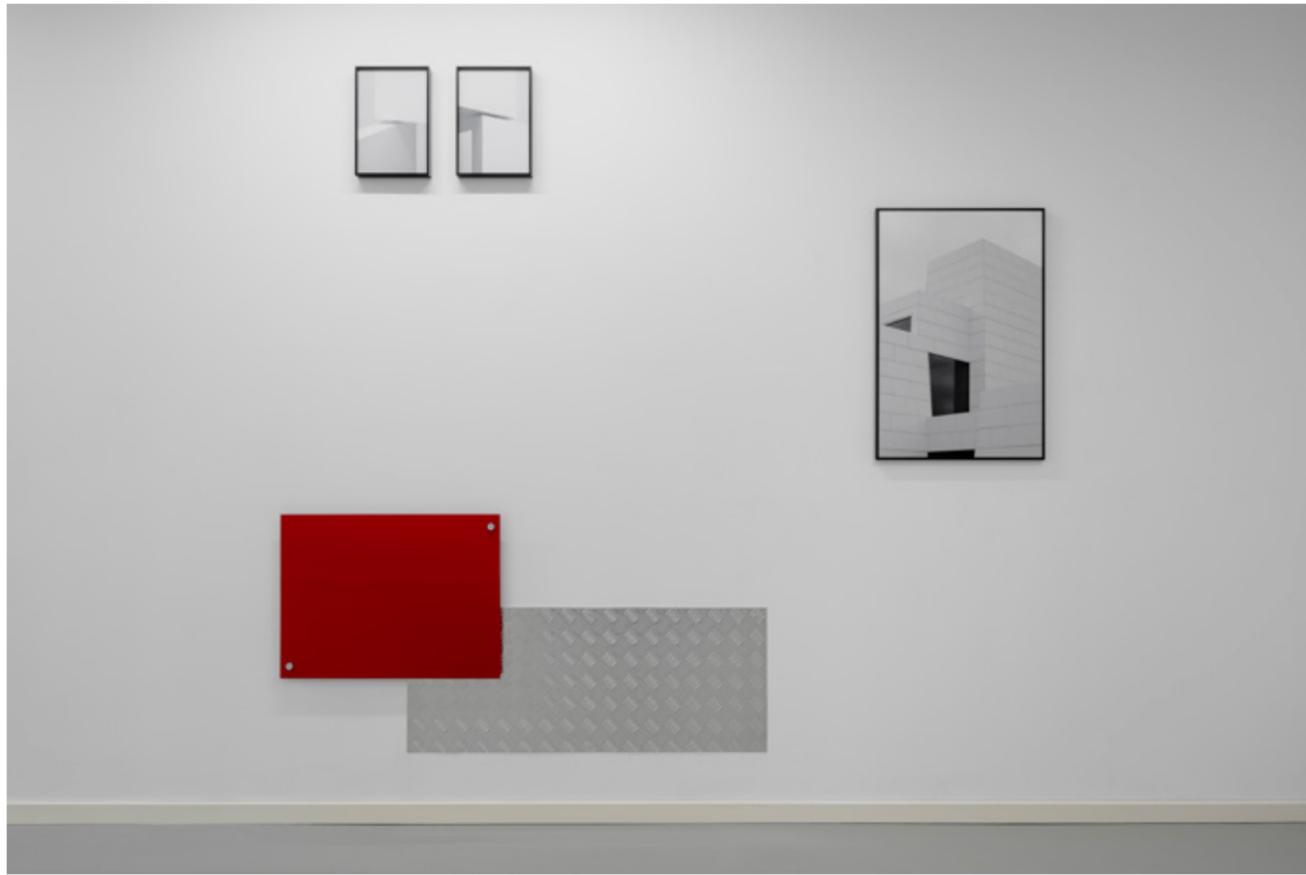


View of the installation Basque Artist Program 2015-19, Museo Guggenheim Bilbao (July- September, 2022)  
© FMGB Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa, picture by Erika Barahona E



KB Contemporary. Oslo (Norway), 2022.

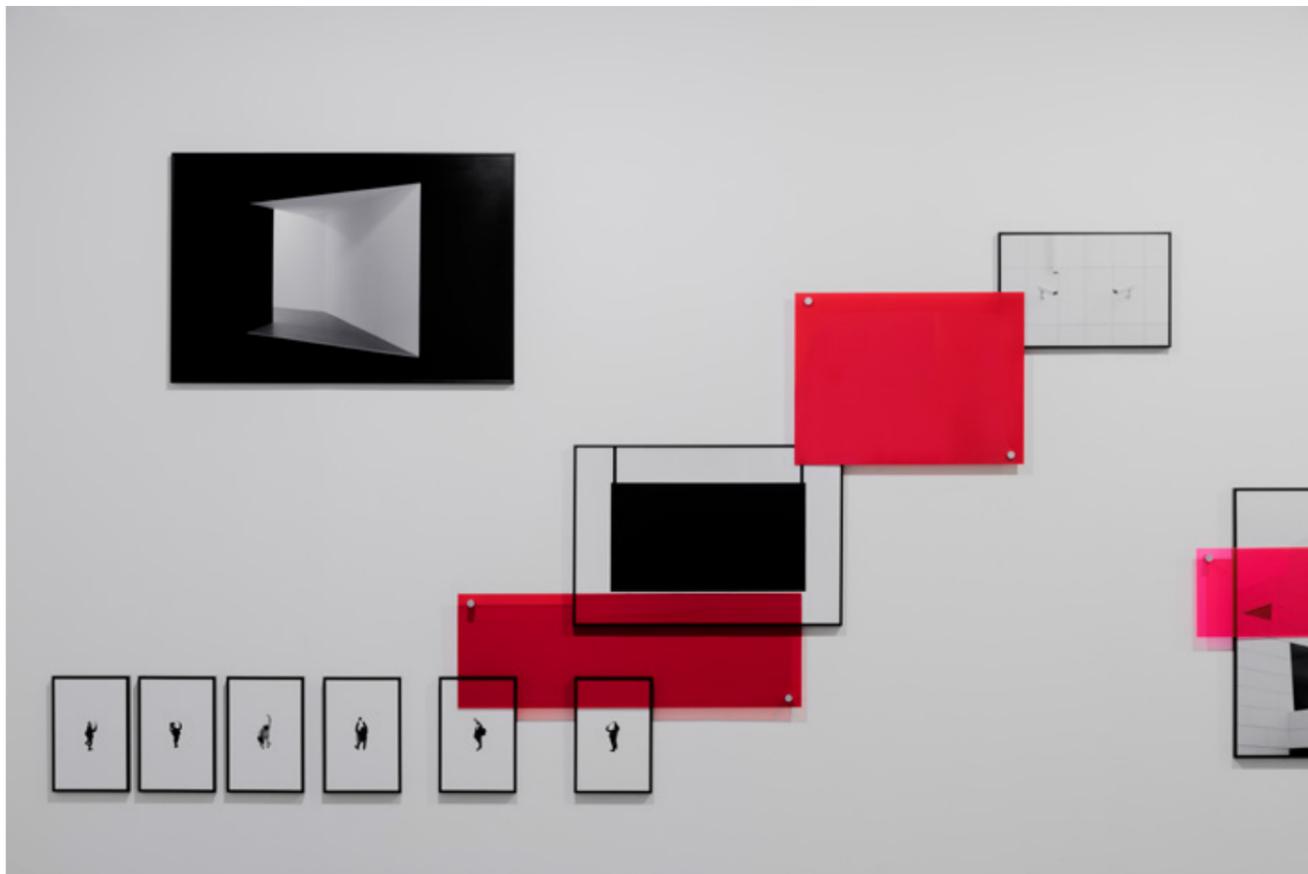
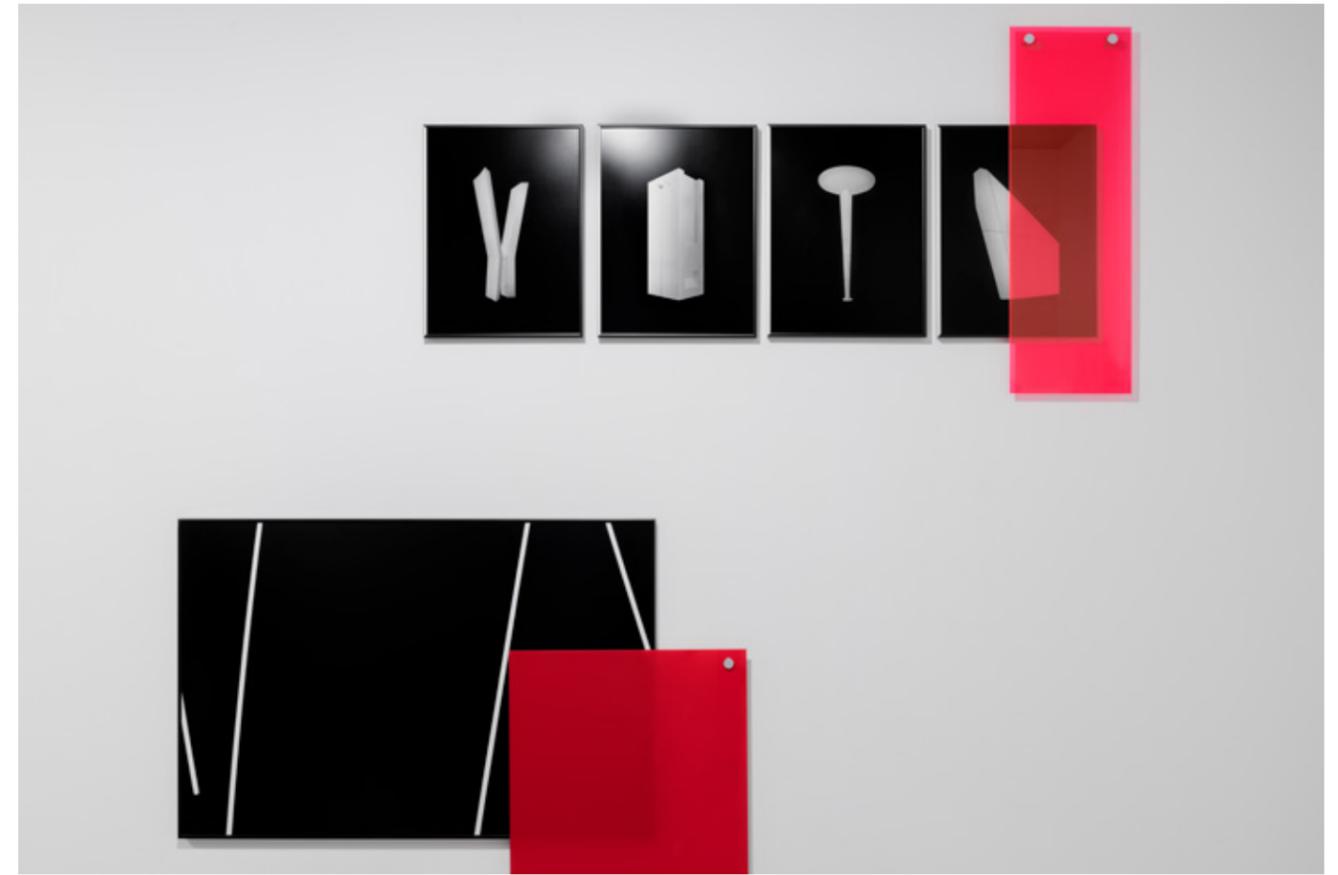
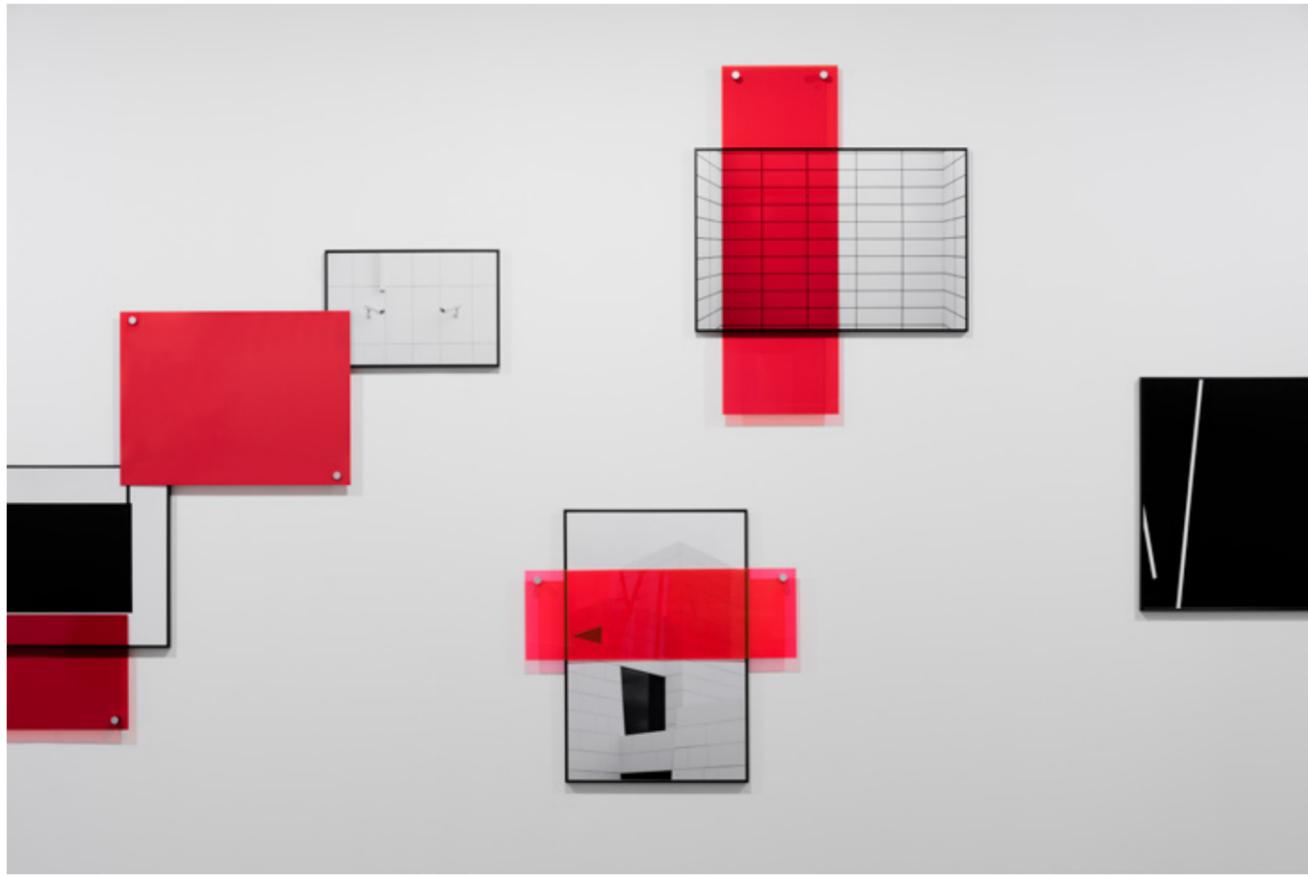




KB Contemporary. Oslo (Norway), 2022.



Círculo de bellas Artes. Madrid (Spain), 2020.



Círculo de bellas Artes. Madrid (Spain), 2020.