

**ERIK SMITH - SELECTED PROJECTS**



## **AABBCCDV (REDUX BERLIN)**

2014-15

Installation, Errant Bodies, Berlin (DE)

12" record edition, turntable, pedestal, audio equipment, table sculpture, record jacket collages, photo-gram spray painting, Magic City print edition

AABBCCDV (redux Berlin) reprises a project created and first presented in Miami, FL (US) in 2012. Serving as the point of departure for the work was the then imminent demolition of a building that was home to several Miami arts organizations, among them DimensionsVariable (DV), an artist-run exhibition venue. DV had used the building for a number of years both for exhibitions and as an artist studio, but were ultimately forced to vacate the premises in 2012 to make way for new development.

The demolition of the structure can be read as a marker for urban transformations in general, a process that is as much about speculative growth and renewal as it is one of negation and fragmentation. Such forces are also presently at work remaking Berlin, where rampant commercial and private development is quickly supplanting the city's identity as an inexpensive haven for artist-run exhibition spaces and their practices, begging the question: What next?

Included in the show at Errant Bodies is the print edition Magic City (2012-14), a separate work featuring original images of abandoned homes in various Miami neighborhoods paired with reader commentaries from online articles on the 2012 housing crisis, when nearly 20% of homes around Miami were vacant/ boarded up.



Installation view, Errant Bodies, Berlin (DE), Jan 2015





Installation detail, record edition of DV demolition



>>CLICK TO PLAY RECORD: <https://vimeo.com/119266451>

Pedestal, 12" record edition of DV demolition, turntable, headphones 165x44x34cm



Installation view: table (destroyed arch. model), black rubber, painted MDF, table base, 75x90x160cm













Installation view: table (destroyed arch. model), record jacket collages

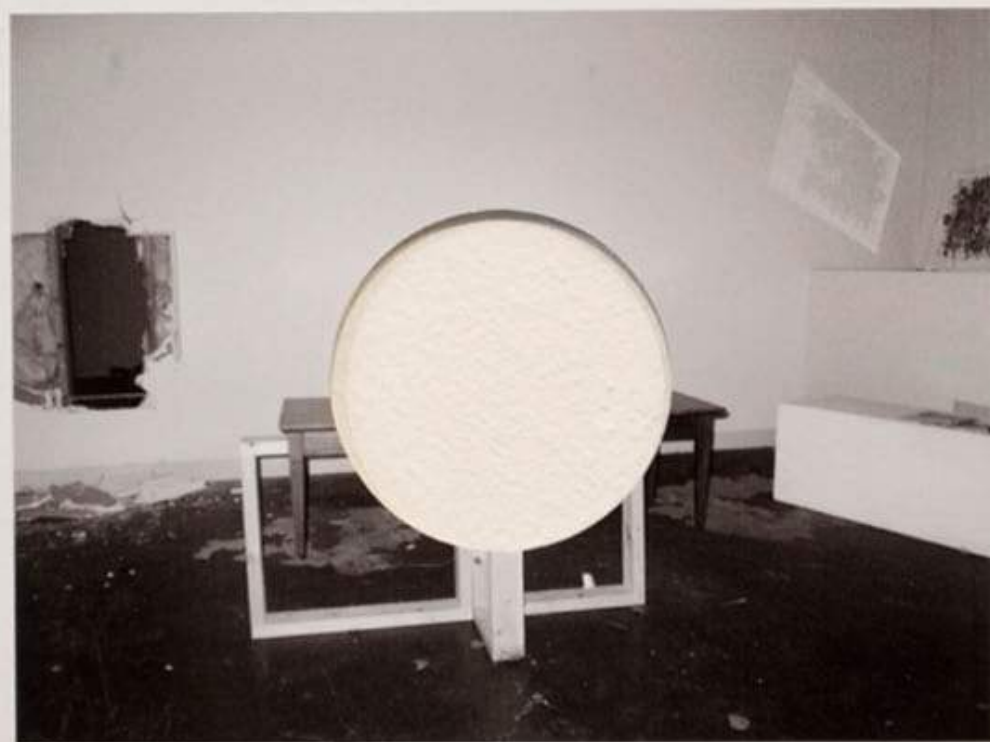


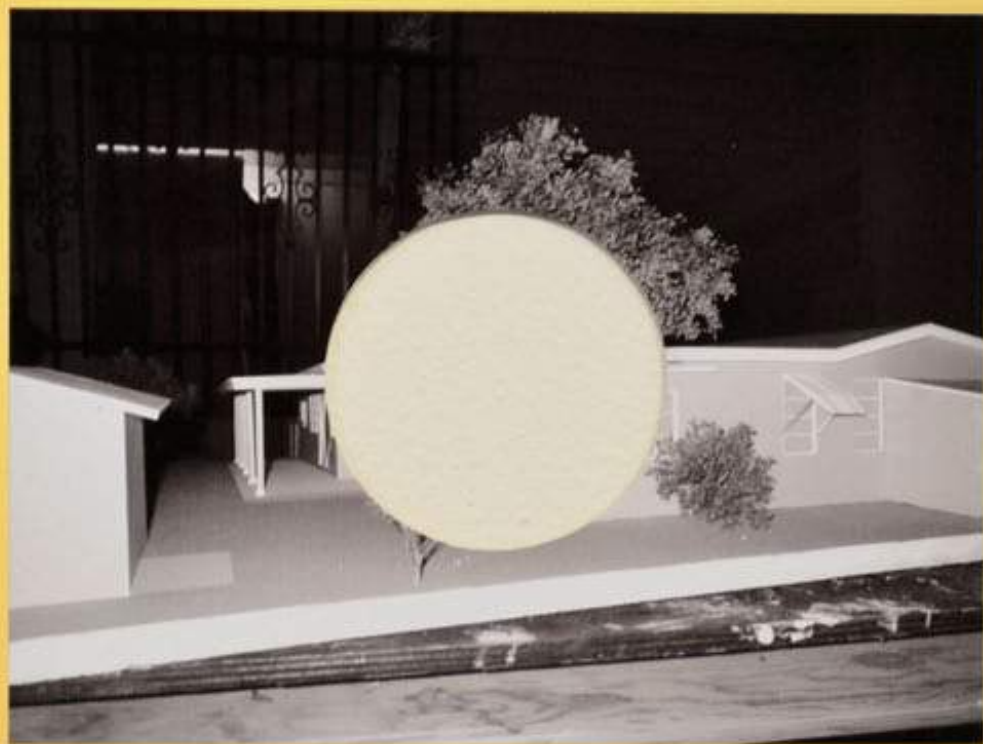
Record jacket collages detail, images of materials left inside DV interior prior to building demolition adhered to found record jackets, each 32x32cm

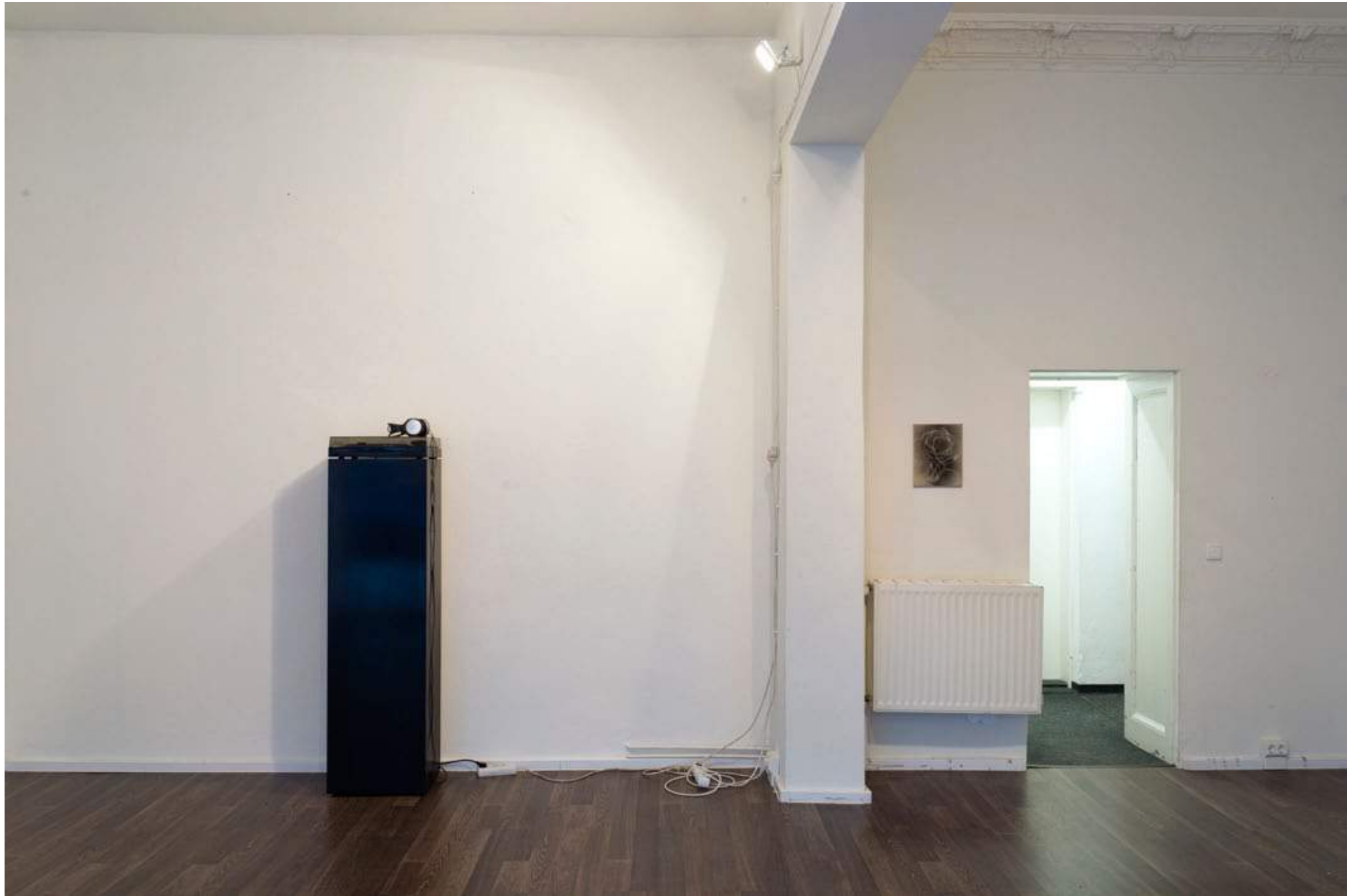




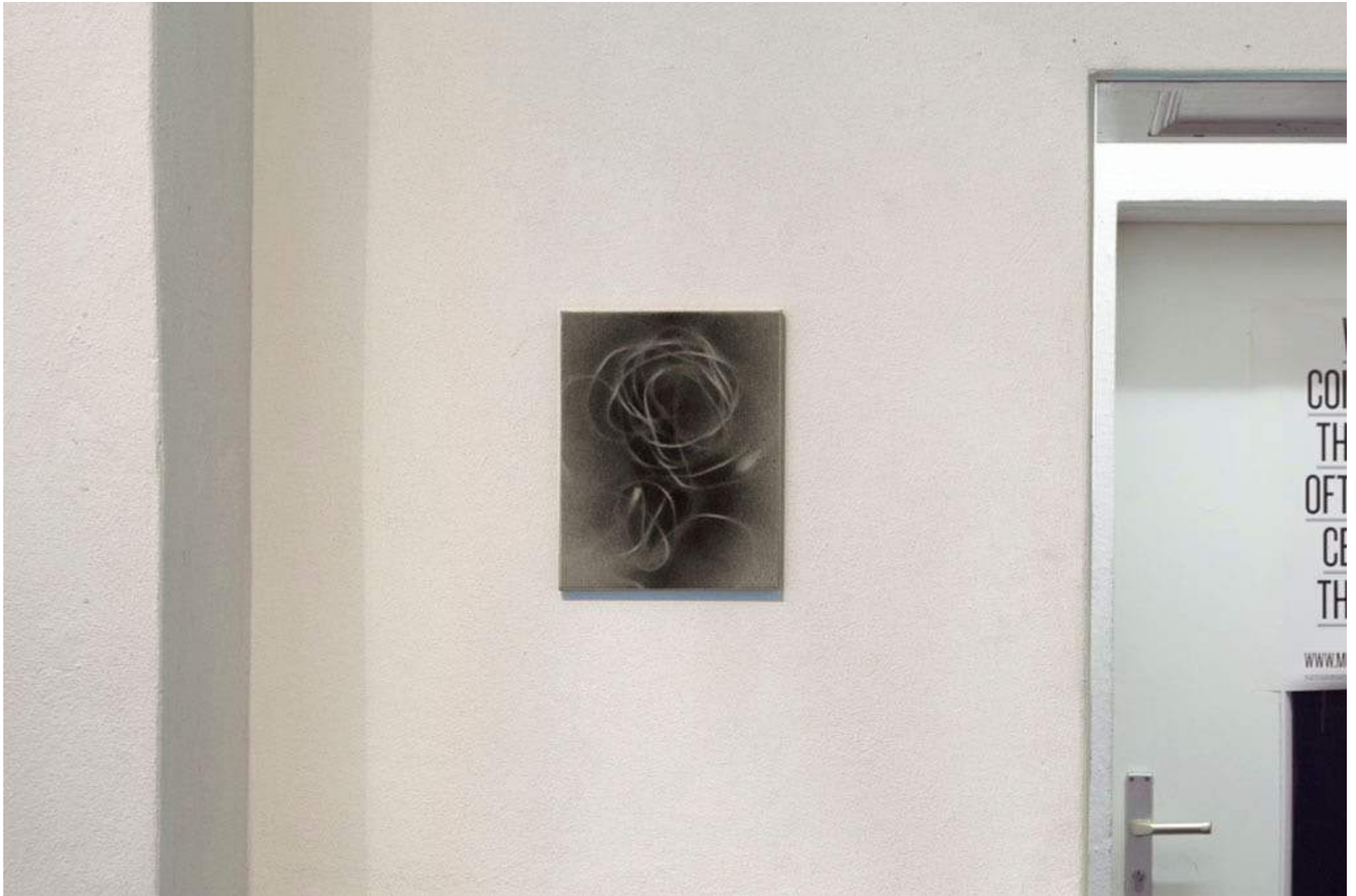
Record jacket collage detail, ink jet print adhered to found 12" record jacket, 32x32cm











Photogram spray painting of microphone cables used to capture audio recording of DV demolition, spray paint on linen, 30x25x2cm





Magic City: photos of foreclosed homes taken in various Miami neighborhoods paired with reader commentaries to online articles on the housing crisis. 2012-14. 70x100 cm. Edition of 150 + 5 AP





The housing market will still decline for a few more years people, a lot of people found out the hard way that buying your own home was someone else's American dream, they bought their homes back in the 60's and made good money when they decided to sell, back then a home was what \$10,000, what were people thinking, if I can't drag it into my grave when I die I don't need it.....

\*\*\*\*\*  
It's funny though..... my co-workers telling me it's the best time to buy a home and the interest rates are the lowest it's decided. They said the same thing 2 yrs ago. Anyone that follows the news know that jobs haven't come back, barely enough to cover the unemployed. And that is except, still a clusterf--- over there and it's getting worse. What happens there, affects us here. Welcome to global economy.

There are also twice as many people looking for a house, many at them not in a position to wait around a couple decades until the market improves.... They bought a house when and where they could and under whatever terms they could get, which for the vast majority heavily favor the bank. People will pay whatever price they have to for things they absolutely have to have like housing and education.

\*\*\*\*\*  
I expect foreclosures to increase across the country. The lenders have been allowed to hold the non-traditional loans open on the books in some cases for over three years now. In other words, most of the foreclosures that have happened so far have been of loans that had government backed insurance, so that the taxpayers have been on the hook for whatever amounts were left after the property was seized and sold. Double dipping, anyone?



It's Bush's fault, it's Obama's fault, it's the Republicans' fault, it's the Democrats' fault, it's the conservative's fault, it's the liberal's fault..... blah, blah, blah. Their divide and conquer concept seems to be working just fine. Conquerors = politicians. Divided = Americans.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Your logic is just amazing! America is a CAPITALIST COUNTRY, based on the individuals right to choose. There are consequences for the decisions one makes.

Because a group of people (15% is close to the true unemployed) under employed rate in the US) choose to be uneducated, and their government chooses to enable them for 30+ years while they breed, and create more of their own "I am entitled mentality" does not make that thinking correct.

.....and the mortgage broker who knew that the mortgage would not be paid, and falsified documents to get his commission.....the bank that bought the mortgage, only to resell it, and collect commissions and service fees, knowing it would not be repaid.....and the Wall Street firms, that packaged the loans as "structured investment vehicles," knowing they.....and the Wall Street firms, that packaged the loans as "structured investment vehicles," knowing they were crap.....but which generated huge commissions.....Don't just blame greedy homeowners. It is, in fact, the banks' job to know whether a loan is likely to be paid or not.

\*\*\*\*\*  
First in bank failures, foreclosures. The correlation is the republican control Ethics bureau destroyed Clinton's repugnant record from medical drugs in home care. Need private fence politics.



We make laws in this country the same way pat are elected, mon ey talks, otherwise there would be laws saying UM UM if there are 10 dogs in your area just sitting there you can't build another.....owners/developers would be forced to improve/raise/repaint or something to that effect, instead.....they are allowed to get tax breaks based simply on the fact that they don't have a rented out or leased etc.....Again it's about the all mighty dollar and nothing more.....our society unfortunately is becoming more and more currency based and less humanly based by the day, when the \$'s hit the fan don't knock on my door.....I don't know you!

By the time the total impact of it all is revealed, there will not be anyone to indict for the crimes behind all of this..... they will have all been given "immunity from prosecution" by our federal government.



You ever hear of PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY?  
Anyone ever hold a gun to anyone's head and say YOU have to buy this?

If one can not afford something within their personal income, don't buy it, whether a house, car, phone, TV, or what one wants!

You want to blame "others" for your personal decisions and your inability to compete, or succeed, in society, because you can not live at a level YOU want to live at, and evidently, can not afford or be successful at!

Stop blaming others and take control of your life! Master of my fate, Captain of my ship!



OK - as, lets see, Hmmm..... we have all these vacant homes, and we have this nagging homelessness problem. Hmmm..... hundreds of thousands of homeless families - hundreds of thousands of empty vacant homes. What to do? What to do?

I've got it! Let's sell the vacant homes to greedy home flippers, so they can make big bucks and get tax breaks, and lets make it illegal to lend those damn homeless folk. I mean, if you need them, they will just come back.

\*\*\*\*\*  
This is just the new tip of the foreclosure iceberg. Also, this doesn't take into account the millions of current mortgages that are underwater and in default. That will inevitably be foreclosed on.



The "give houses to people who couldn't pay a mortgage" Liberal wealth redistribution axiom is what tanked the economy. And Obama did exactly what to fix the economy when he had both houses of Congress? Right, zero. All he's done is squandered \$1.5 Trillion a year that we don't have. What a LOSER.....

\*\*\*\*\*  
It will be at least another 2 years before we start seeing an uptick in home values. It will be another 5 - 7 years before the price of a home is equal to its value. If society doesn't get its \$ht together and start acting like responsible adults it could be 20 years before things are back to what should have been normal before Dodd, Frank, and all of the other radical whimsy gambled the wealth of the average American away with their little social engineering project. But hey, maybe it wasn't a gamble? Maybe it was their way of spreading the wealth around?



Don't people realize that house prices increasing by that kind of rate are bad for the future? Why the hell do you think people were even overbidding themselves to buy a house? Because it was becoming more and more unaffordable, that's why. Keep going on like that and the only people able to own a home and have the financial security (and ability to actually retire someday) will be the rich and very rich. It will be out of reach for the majority of people. Fantastic.

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Good law abiding citizens always lose in the end. When you can't pay you should leave. But that is not the society we live in today. You live where you can steal. That not paying your rent is stealing. They are the ones that are protected and they know that. Everytime I pay my mortgage I say why. I know it's the right thing. I feel like I am the one that is doing it wrong.



There is a great federal bill proposed last week by our very own Representative Floorey. Its to make the banks get off their butts and sell the properties.

From having been in real estate for over 20 years in Florida, and having done about sells from the Resolution Trust Corporation, this short sale cycle has banks listed properties for sale WITH NO PRICE!

Heck, and most the homes were subprime with unpaid mgs and property taxes and insurance.

I suspect, because I have banking friends, that the banks are KOTING, like people kill or Rust checks, the PMI insurance buyers pay for to secure the banks' interest if you know? They want to collect that foreclosure insurance money, the home has to be on the market, but the banks don't have to accept an offer. So they don't.



Oh yes, our nation is still #1 when up to 1/3 of our youth cannot find a job at all and banks own more houses than the public. You guys crack me up. What part of economic rot can you guys not understand? What part of letting half of our country rot in poverty caused by predatory banking and short term profit grabs on wall street do you guys think is something we should tolerate and even hope?

\*\*\*\*\*  
It is common sense that a person making \$30,000 per year can not afford a \$200,000 house or a person making \$40,000 per year can not afford a \$400,000 home. It is also common sense that you do not take \$40,000 equity out of your home to buy a new car or take that dream trip. There are so many people out there thinking they could and to many banks that gave them the loans. Now it is time to pay the paper for unwise decisions.



When one guy can't find a job, when one guy loses his house it was probably his fault. When 30% of the entire country is stuck in their house for 5 years due to CEO's gambling with hundreds of billions that is a systemic problem.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Appraisers were in bed with the banks. The banks only got their mortgage if the appraiser said the house was worth what the offer was, so there was collusion going on to make sure that happened. After the crash, appraisers tightened up and I know of many occasions where sales did not go through because the house was appraised and said to be overvalued. It has become twice as expensive to own a house over the last 30-40 years. This is not natural, and not a good thing. The people who have most to gain from it? Banks, realtors, appraisers, etc. Furry Put.

"Too many banks granted those loans." As a kid, you want to eat the whole half gallon of ice cream or the whole box of chocolate. It's the adults (banks) who must say no. They don't in the name of alleged huge profits.....now we all pay the price. And don't give me the crap that the Feds forced the banks to give the loans. I have not heard any reports of anyone complaining they didn't get their loan when they had the means to pay for it!

We've lost \$4 trillion in home equity. Complete battery spin. The long term average appreciation rate is 2%-3% and follows household median income, almost exactly. Look it up. Nobody knows when the trend line will turn upward. It won't be tomorrow or next year. Markets are irrational. Some are good and many are bad bad. We are bouncing along the bottom and won't know when we've broken out until a year or two after the fact.



Them pering a house isn't the problem, them not having a way to legitimately afford it is, which is largely due to 30 years of no wage gains, technology and outsourcing eliminating so many good paying jobs, and house values artificially inflated by banks and appraisers for decades. "Strategic default"..... No, it should be called "Stupid money". These are the dilemmas that bought an over-priced house they couldn't afford. Look out home equity loans that they quickly spent, and now have the gall to refuse to pay their mortgages while still remaining in the house. This is a slap in the face to responsible citizens everywhere, and tears at the moral fabric of society in this country.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 dude, the gty is up, the United States is a third world country



When we have a federal government passing out money to Wall Street and bankers after the fact with impunity who were allowed to create the economic disaster, what makes you think we will ever hit bottom and use sound economics? On top of that, the government is spending much more than it is taking in, piling on unrepayable debt, and printing money without backing. Greece hasn't hit bottom yet, so we have a lot more ugliness to go through. Buying current rates is more important than sound economics, or worrying about the future.

\*\*\*\*\*  
There are still 2.8 million homes in default. Monthly foreclosure stats are meaningless as it's up to the banks to decide when they foreclose. Whenever the heats up they slow down when less attention is focused on them they ramp up the pace.

Too many people bought way beyond their means and took out equity loans on delinquent equity. Too many banks granted those loans. Now, they are facing a reality check. Love it. And hope those foreclosures, and all the rest get on with it, so we get back to true value. Maybe people won't be so willing to take out pie in the sky loans in future.

While I agree that people paid way too much for houses they couldn't afford (and couldn't have been built but for luxury in the bubble lending markets), this for a minute, with every foreclosure, the value of the home you are seeking to pay for every day DROPS.

We can be all judgmental all day long, just accept that the future home sale you might have counted on to fund your retirement will never happen until home prices recover to at least 1999 levels.



Great news, more "evidence" for those Americans who want Obama to fail.....is just more "evidence" that Obama is failing.....I get confused.....can we blame it on Greece? Global Warming? maybe China? (I) is no fault of mine that the housing market is underwater. I built my own home with my life savings for over \$1m and now can't get it at 40 cents. Really man, life is tough for us all and while there may be some crooks out there for sure, at that point it's not good. ASHLEY

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The sooner we hit bottom the sooner we can recover. Those who were prudent, saved their money, and waited can now buy houses for more affordable prices. Great for them.  
foreclosure is an olympic event in florida



Teabaggers and Republicans deserve most of the blame, and not just because of the economic disaster inherited from Bush Jr. The never-ending Congressional gridlock they're indulging is making it virtually impossible to improve the lot of anyone except the wealthiest. Ironically, shallow-thinking voters believe that Mall will fix everything, despite that electing him would only accelerate the catastrophic downward the current administration is fighting.

\*\*\*\*\*  
No such thing as equity value of your home anymore. If all goes to property tax and repair. You can still lose your house from back taxes, for profit medical bills, short period of unemployment, etc. Deals can be had at this point to purchase a foreclosure but usually need total remodel or close to it. No longer is owning a home the American dream because you never really own it, not right. Most counties for the yearly cost of property tax you could save







*Them owning a house isn't the problem, them not having a way to legitimately afford it is, which is largely due to 30 years of no wage gains, technology and outsourcing eliminating 50 million good paying jobs, and house values artificially inflated by bankers and appraisers for decades.*

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*dude, the gig is up, the United States is a third world country*

*Oh yes, our nation is still #1 when up to 1/3 of our youth cannot find a job at all and banks own more houses than the public. You guys crack me up. What part of economic rot can you guys not understand? What part of letting half of our country rot in poverty caused by predatory banking and short term profit grabs on wall street do you guys think is something we should tolerate and even foster?*

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*IT is no fault of mine that the housing market is underwater. I built my own home with my life savings for over \$1m and now cant sell it at all, period. Really man, life is tough for us all and while there may be some crooks out there for sure, all that glitters is not gold. ASSWLE*

*+++++*

*The sooner we hit bottom the sooner we can recover. Those who were prudent, saved their money, and waited can now by houses for more affordable prices. Great for them.*

*foreclosure is an olympic event in florida*





Installation view from Kollwitzstrasse, Errant Bodies, Berlin (DE), Jan 2015.





## **DIE RAUEME**

2013

Installation, die raum, Berlin (DE)

3 cast concrete sculptures, flyer edition

Die Raeume presents a collection of concrete casts molded inside the shower cabins and changing rooms of the Stadtbad Oderberger Straße, the former public bath located next door to die raum. The casts depict detailed sections of the old tile walls with traces of removed fixtures, as well as hollowed-out drainage cavities. Referencing the concrete materiality of die raum and its shower cabin-like dimensions, the installation establishes a physical and aesthetic link between the bath and the exhibition space, between a listed historical monument and a recently built room devoid of history.

Die Raeume functions as a documentation or “salvage” of the otherwise unnoticed surfaces and cavities of an historic public structure before its impending renovation and transformation into a new, privatized entity. In his work Erik Smith often focuses on transitional sites, addressing moments of rupture and the fragmentation of meaning underlying the processes of urban regeneration. Through a series of cast fragments, Die Raeume narrates this inevitable slippage of meaning set within the physical and social context of die raum. (Lotte Møller)





Installation views: Die Raeume, die raum, Berlin (DE), 2013





Concrete cast of Stadtbad shower cabin floor, 75x75x12cm

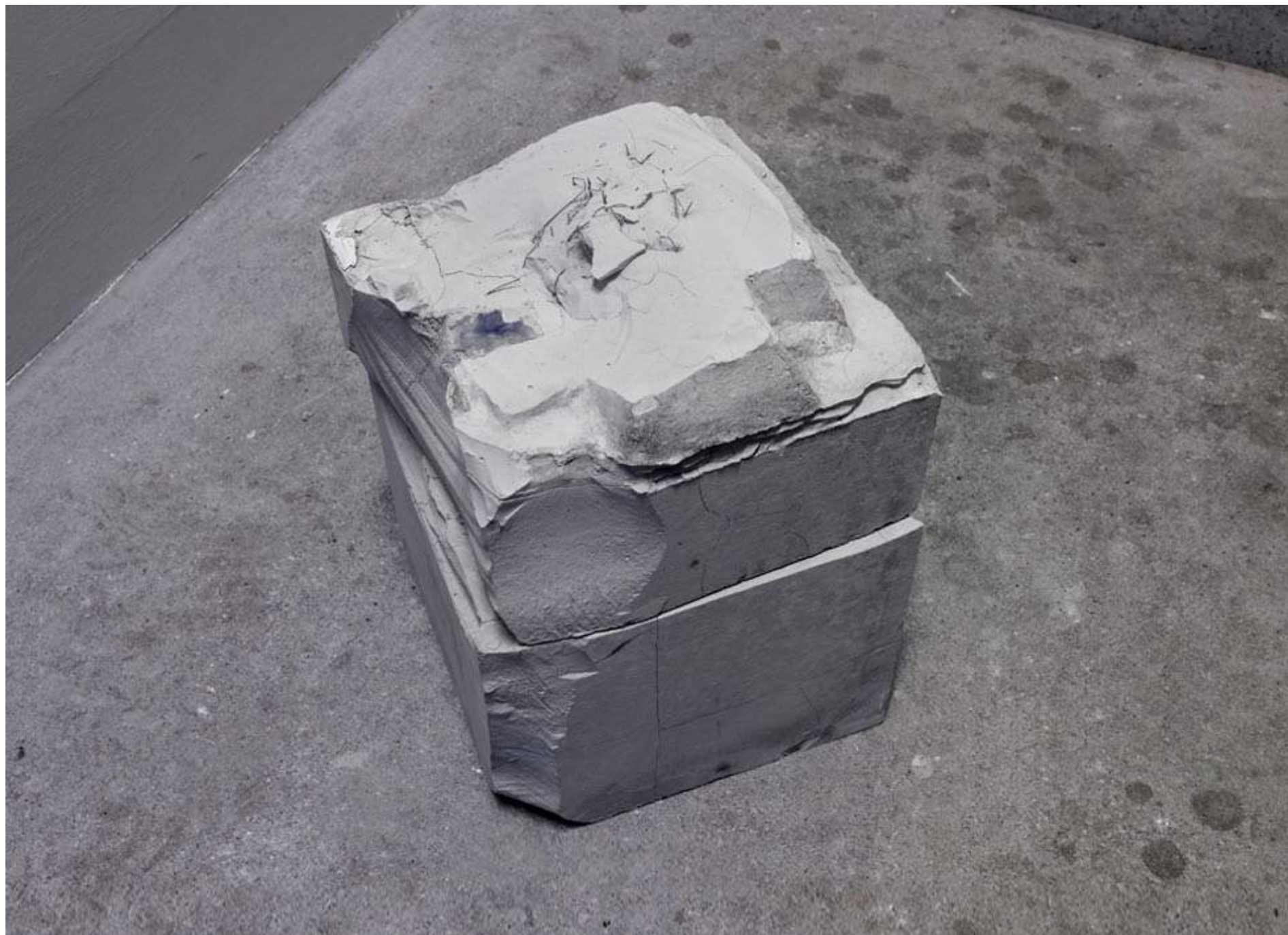






Concrete cast of Stadtbad shower drainage cavity, 30x30x30cm











Concrete cast of Stadtbad shower cabin wall & fixtures, 100x100x12cm



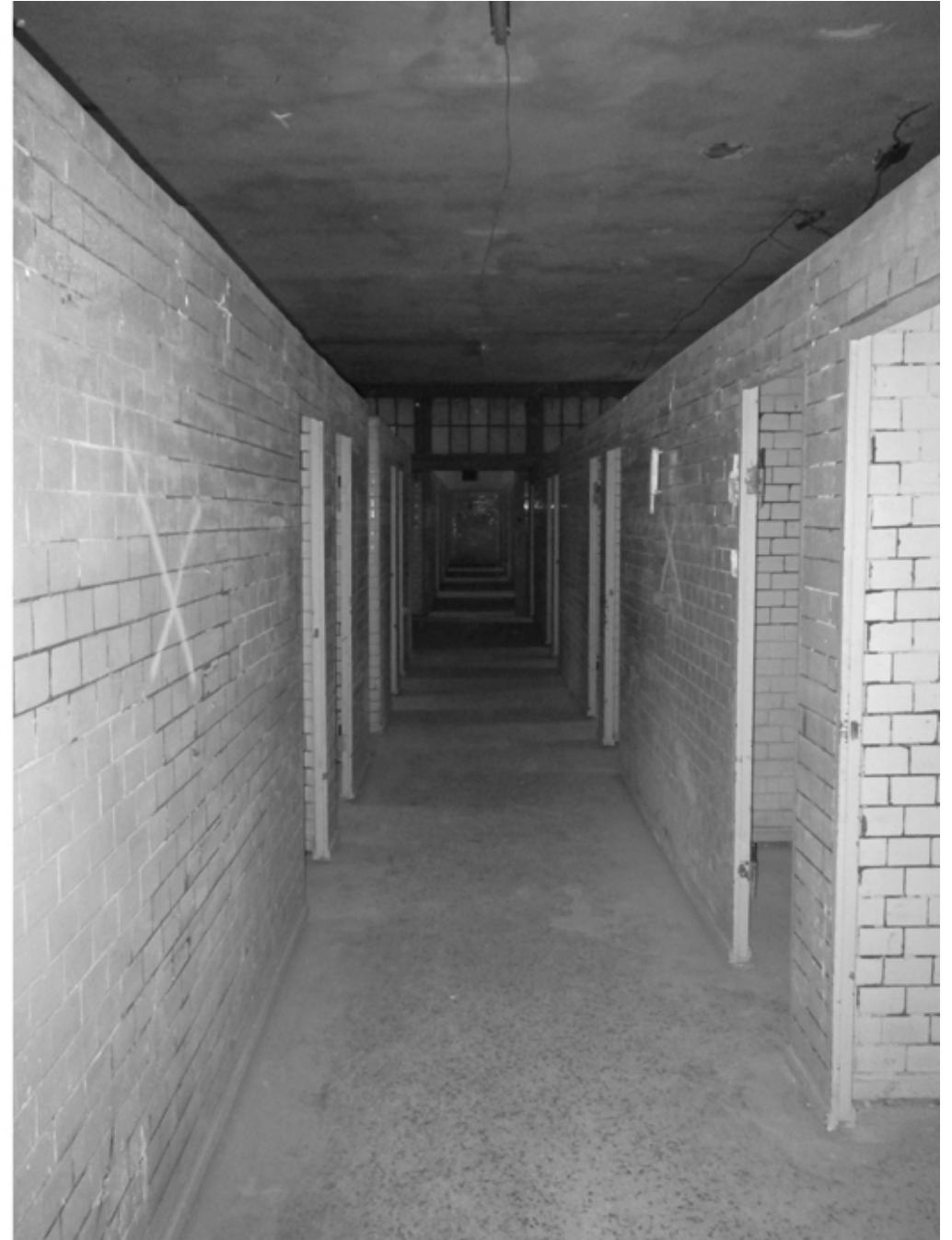






Reference images, Stadbad shower cabins





Reference image: shower cabins, Stadtbad Oderberger Berlin, 2012 prior to dismantling/renovation



Die Räume presents a small collection of concrete ruins nestled inside the shower cabins and changing rooms of the Stadtbad Oderberger Straße – the former public bath located near door to the room. The work poetically depicts detailed sections of the old 19th-century walls with traces of removed features, as well as hollowed-out drainage cavities. Reframing the concrete materiality of the room and its shower cabin-like dimensions, the installation establishes a physical and aesthetic link between the bath and the exhibition space, between a listed historical monument and a recently built room devoid of history.

Die Räume functions as a documentation or "archive" of the otherwise unnoticed surfaces and cavities of an historic public structure before its impending renovation and transformation into a new private entity. In his work Erik Smith often focuses on transitional sites, addressing moments of rupture and the negotiation of meaning underlying the processes of urban regeneration. Through a series of vast fragments, Die Räume narrates this inevitable collapse of meaning within the physical and social context of the room.

**erik smith**  
**die räume**

**vernissage**  
**february 23**  
**19h**

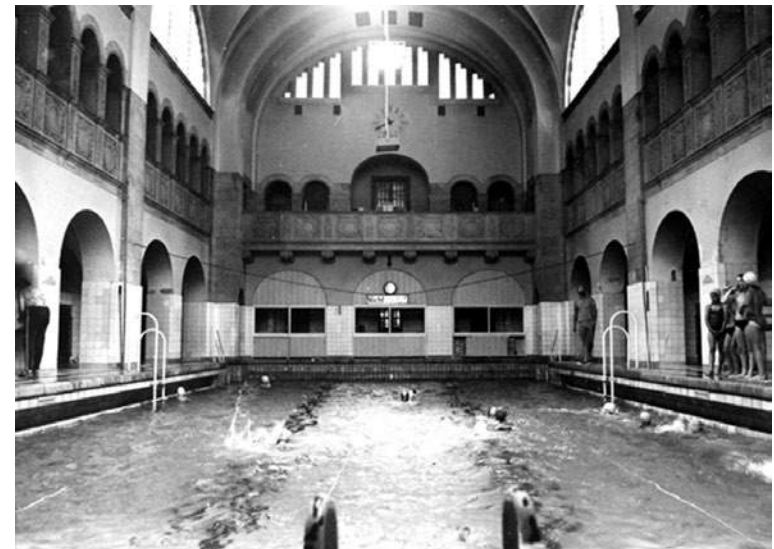


[www.dieraum.net](http://www.dieraum.net)

**die raum**

february 24 – april 7 | viewable 24 hours | oderberger straÙe 56

2013 0013



Reference images: Stadtbad Oderbergerstr. (above); main swim hall (below)





Installation view of die raum on Oderbergerstrasse next to the Stadtbad







## **AABBCCDV**

2012

Installation, DimensionsVariable (DV), Miami, FL (US)

Found / modified sculptures, 12" record edition & sound equipment, record jacket collage edition

In May 2012, DimensionsVariable and other local Miami arts organizations were forced to vacate the building they occupied since it was slated for demolition. For AABBCCDV, materials left behind in the abandoned building by former tenants—some of which were finished artworks or materials used in the production of artworks—were removed, reconfigured, painted black, and staged in an alternative, temporary space as a gallery exhibition of “artifacts” from the site. Presented in the back room of this temporary space was a twisted white metal gate, which was removed from the original site post-demolition, and a 12" record edition of the former DV building being destroyed, created by placing contact microphones inside the structure and capturing the sounds of the architecture as it was razed to the ground. For the exhibition opening, a stack of various records found in the former building, and which had likely been played at other opening events and parties, were alternated with the specially-produced recording of the building's destruction.



Installation view ABBCCDV (front room), modified sculptures/artifacts from materials found inside DV prior to building demolition, DimensionsVariable, Miami FL, 2012







Installation detail, modified sculpture/artifact from materials found inside DV (destroyed architectural model), 75x150x125cm



Found & modified sculpture/artifact (destroyed arch. model), 75x150x125cm



Reference image, inside DV













Reference image, inside DV



Found & modified sculpture/artifact (table sculpture), 75x75x125cm



Found & modified sculpture/artifact (boxes with ceiling panel), 150x75x50cm



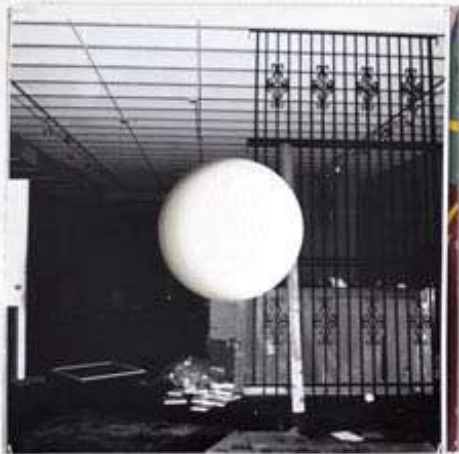
Reference image, inside DV



Installation view ABBCCDV (back room), destroyed gate, 12" record of DV demolition, found records, turntable, amp, speakers, DimensionsVariable, Miami FL, 2012







Installation detail, record jacket collages with image of DV interior/artist gate, 32x32x1 cm, ed. 3









12" record edition of DV demolition created by placing contact microphones inside the building. Ed. of 6.

>> **PLAY RECORD:** <https://vimeo.com/119266451>



Reference images: DV pre and post demolition, Miami, May 2012



Audio recording of demolition:

>> PLAY RECORD: <https://vimeo.com/119266451>

Link:

<http://dimensionsvariable.net/2012/04/24/aabbccdv-erik-smith/>

Press:

<http://www.elnuevoherald.com/2012/05/27/1211874/erik-smith-arqueologia-urbana.html> (spanish)

<http://www.knightarts.org/community/miami/dig-into-dimensions-variables-new-space>

<http://artisabout.com/2012/05/25/eric-smith-dimensions-variable/>

<http://www.miaminewtimes.com/2012-05-10/culture/wynwood-art-walk-clandestine-culture-takes-center-stage/>







## TEST DIG NO. 1

2011-12

Temporary public sculpture, Skulpturenpark Berlin\_Zentrum, Berlin-Kreuzberg (DE)

Excavated spiral staircase, 35mm slide show projection, spiral drawing edition

Artist Erik Smith began searching for building foundations to excavate in an overgrown, vacant lot in Berlin. After two days of digging, he unearthed the top of a curved wall, whereupon his shovel struck a hollow sound. Like an archeologist on the precipice of a chance discovery, Smith methodically uncovered a wholly intact, cast-iron, spiral staircase, a nineteenth-century remnant preserved below the “death strip” of the Berlin Wall.

The excavation is located at Skulpturenpark Berlin\_Zentrum, on one of the few remaining “green zones” leftover from the Cold War division. The staircase and evidence of its discovery, an impressive pile of dirt and rubble, resonate in stark contrast to the massive construction sites and new buildings that surround it. At the center of this real estate frenzy, Smith produces an architecture, a staircase downward emerging.

Little is yet known about its history. The staircase is a recognizable entity, but like the missing floors above, anonymous and hermetic. As an artwork, Smith’s open-ended exploration calls to mind Nietzsche’s writings on the principle of a limited horizon—a space established in which one is not responsible to answer all questions or consider all perspectives. By holding them at bay, one can learn something else. In this way, it can be understood that the process of a discovery made in situ, with physical persistence, has its own status, and that knowing the “facts” might not help such a discovery, but only interrupt it.



Documentation of excavation, Week 2, Berlin-Kreuzberg Oct-Nov 2011, 1 / 80 color 35 mm slides





Documentation of excavation, Week 1, Oct-Nov 2011, 4 / 80 color 35 mm slides





Documentation of excavation, Week 2, Oct-Nov 2011, 4 / 80 color 35 mm slides.









Documentation of excavation, Week 3, Oct-Nov 2011, 4 / 80 color 35 mm slides.





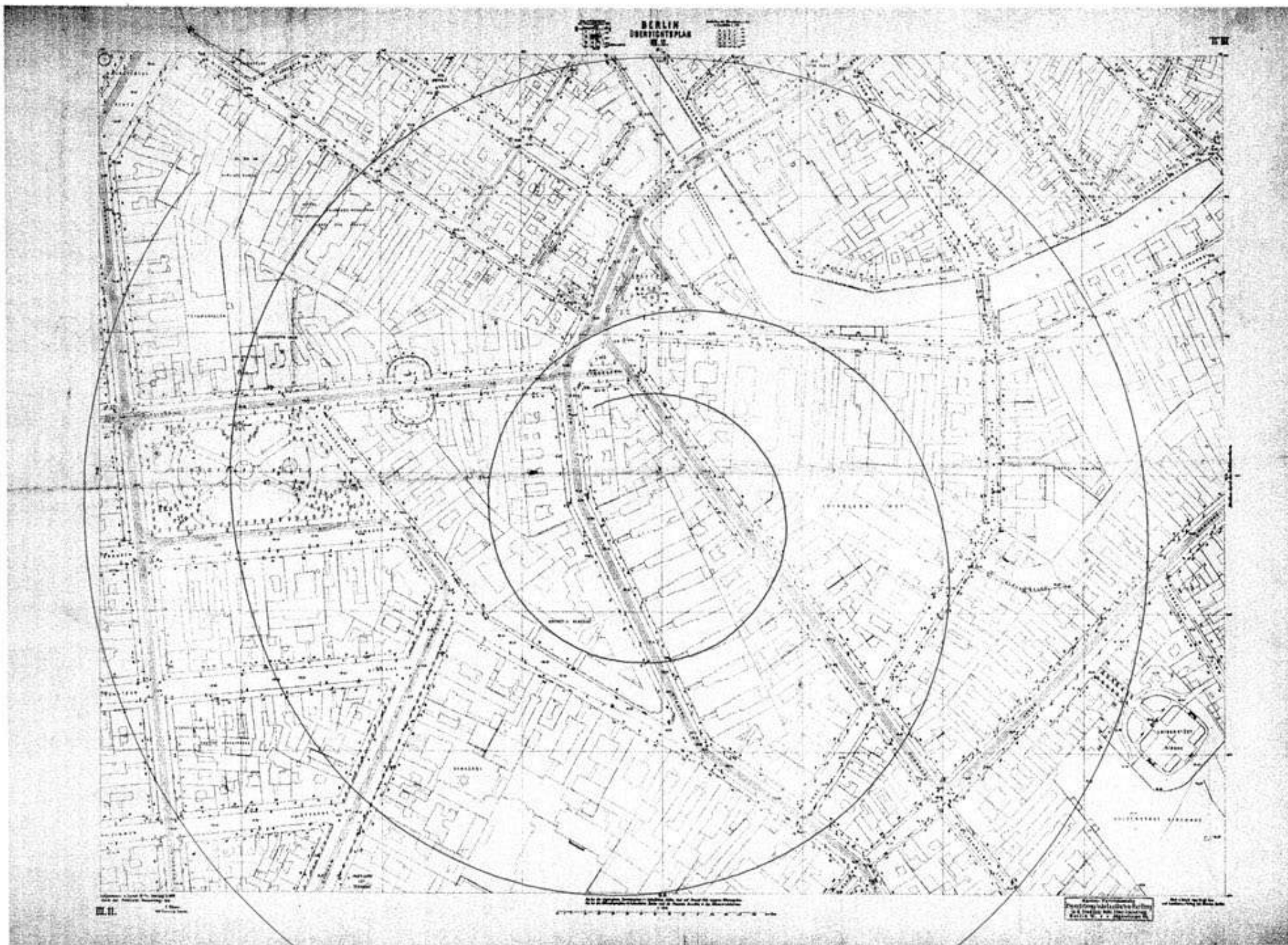
Documentation of excavation, Week 4, Oct-Nov 2011, 4 / 80 color 35 mm slides



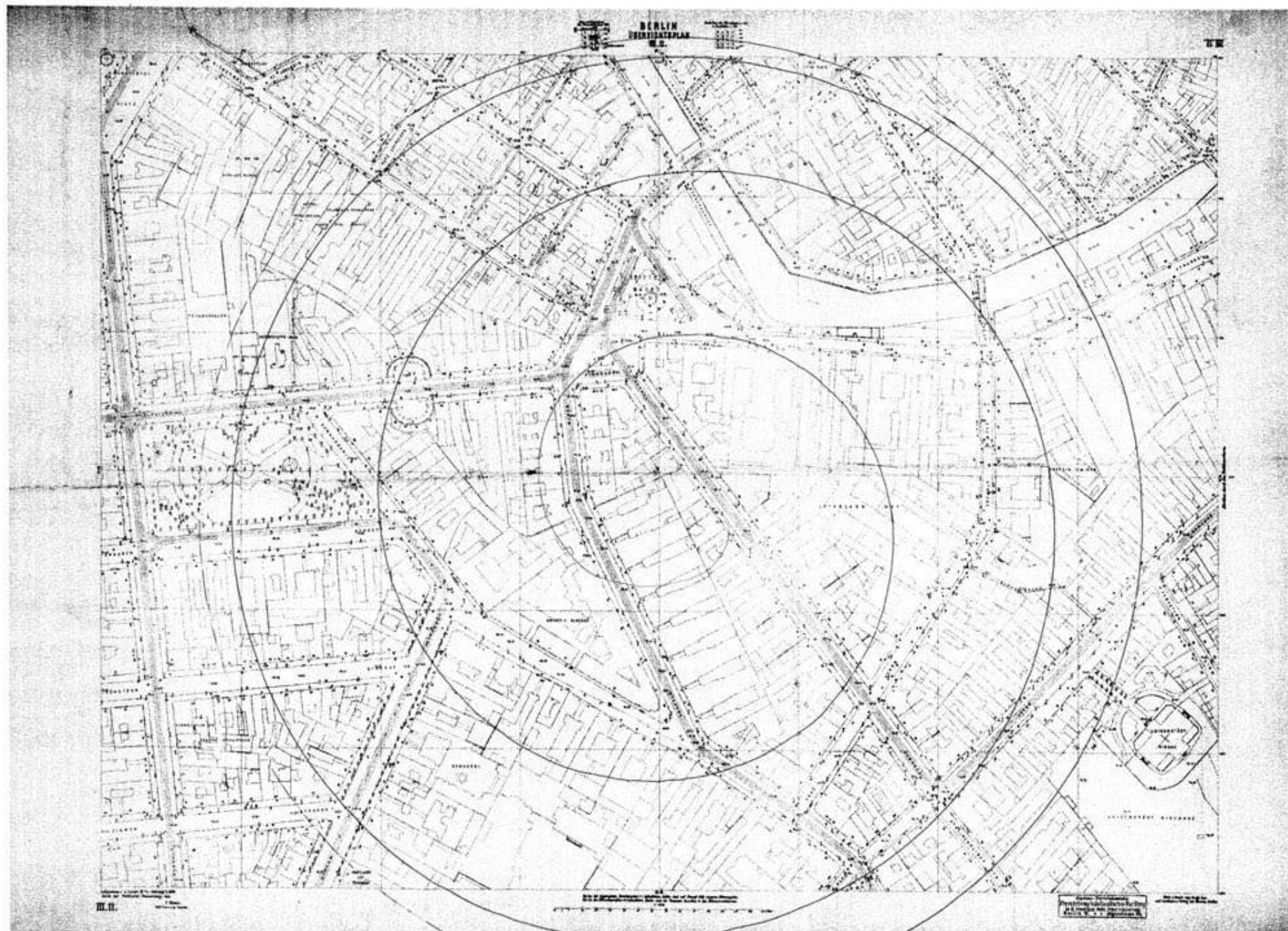


Excavated spiral staircase, Berlin-Kreuzberg Jan 2012

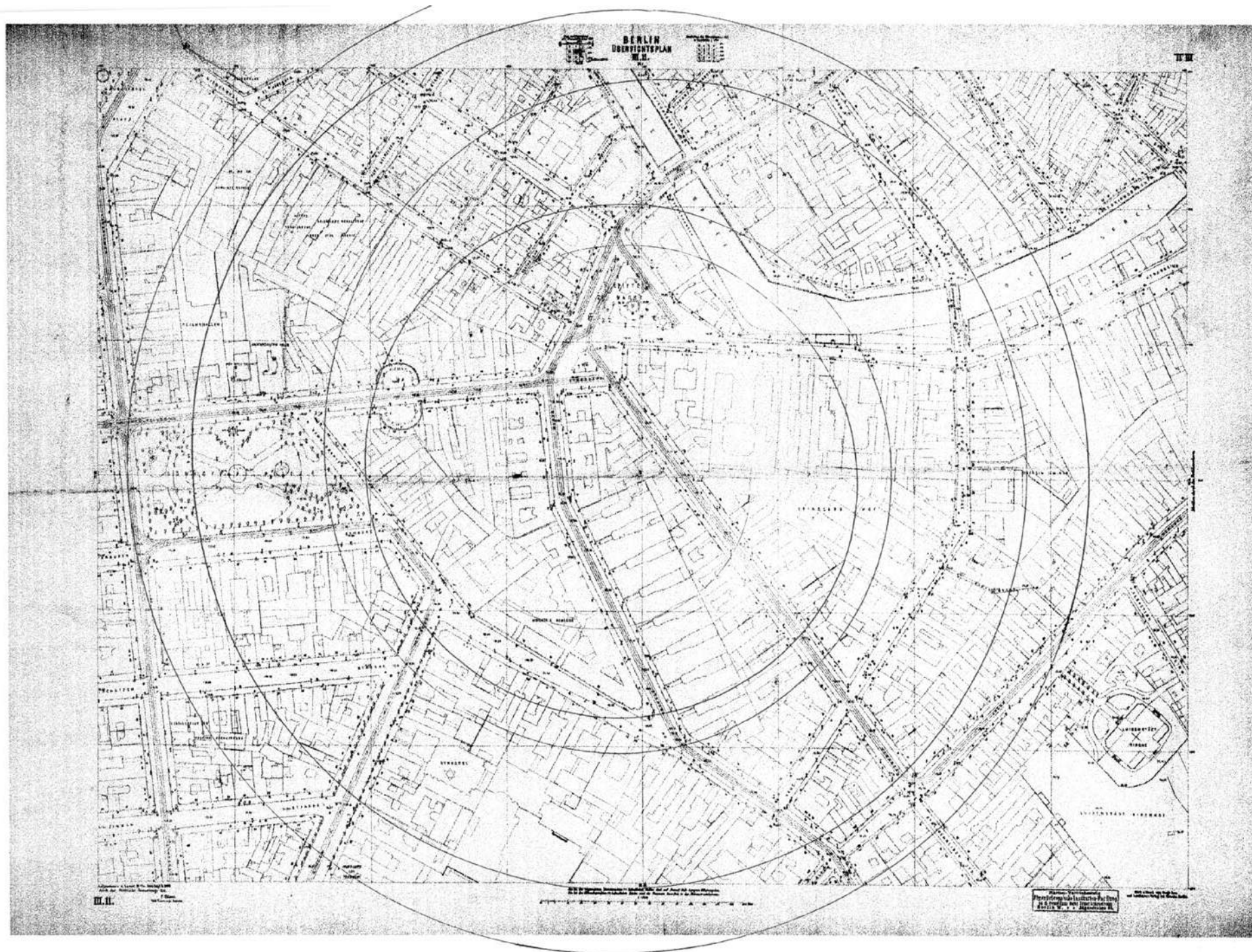




Spiral drawing on 1899 zoning map of Berlin district where staircase discovery was made. 2012-15, Ink on photocopy, A1, unique edition



















Link:

<http://www.kunstrepublik.de/news/erik-smith-test-dig-no1-2011/>

Press:

<http://www.tip-berlin.de/kultur-und-freizeit-kunst-und-museen/erik-smith-im-skulpturenpark>

<http://www.art-in-berlin.de/incbmeld.php?id=2313&-erik-smith>

<http://abapublicart.wordpress.com/2011/10/30/derelict-public-spaces/>









## WHO AMONG YOU DESERVES ETERNAL LIFE?

2008

Installation, SculptureCenter, NYC

Crashed cars (black and white), plaster sculptures, deep space images projected onto terrestrial surfaces

In *Who, Among You, Deserves Eternal Life?* (2008), Smith deposits two crashed cars in SculptureCenter's courtyard. The title of the piece originates from a phrase in Michel Houellebecq's, *The Possibility of an Island* (2005), a novel about the evolution of humanity through reincarnation, making eternal life possible for some but not for all. *Who, Among You, Deserves Eternal Life?* explores the space between acute trauma and timeless transcendence with direct references to art history and fiction, from Andy Warhol, to Jean Luc Godard, J.G. Ballard, and David Cronenberg. Within Smith's sets of references, the two cars that have collided at some point in the real world nod to an abstract cosmic order. Smith points out, "it also reformulates the harmonized duality of black and white as a collision of literally fatal proportions." (Sarina Basta)

*Who, Among You, Deserves Eternal Life?* is conceived as an ongoing multi-phase project whose component parts can be exhibited separately or all at once. It consists of the installation of an actual found car crash (between black and white cars), original "spontaneous" sculptures (cast in bronze), and over-sized plot prints of deep space images projected onto various interior architectural surfaces. The major component, the found car crash, was exhibited by itself in the sculpture courtyard of SculptureCenter in NYC. The title of the piece originates from a phrase in Michel Houellebecq's, *The Possibility of an Island* (2005), a novel about the evolution of humanity through reincarnation, making eternal life possible for some but not for all. Envisioned as a riff on this sentence, the project explores the space between acute trauma and timeless transcendence, setting up a variety of internal oppositions that are played out among its various components: black/white, terrestrial/celestial, real/fictional, original/appropriation, trauma/transcendence, destruction/creation, etc.



Found two-car crash (black & white) Installation view SculptureCenter, dim. var., photo: Jason Mandella







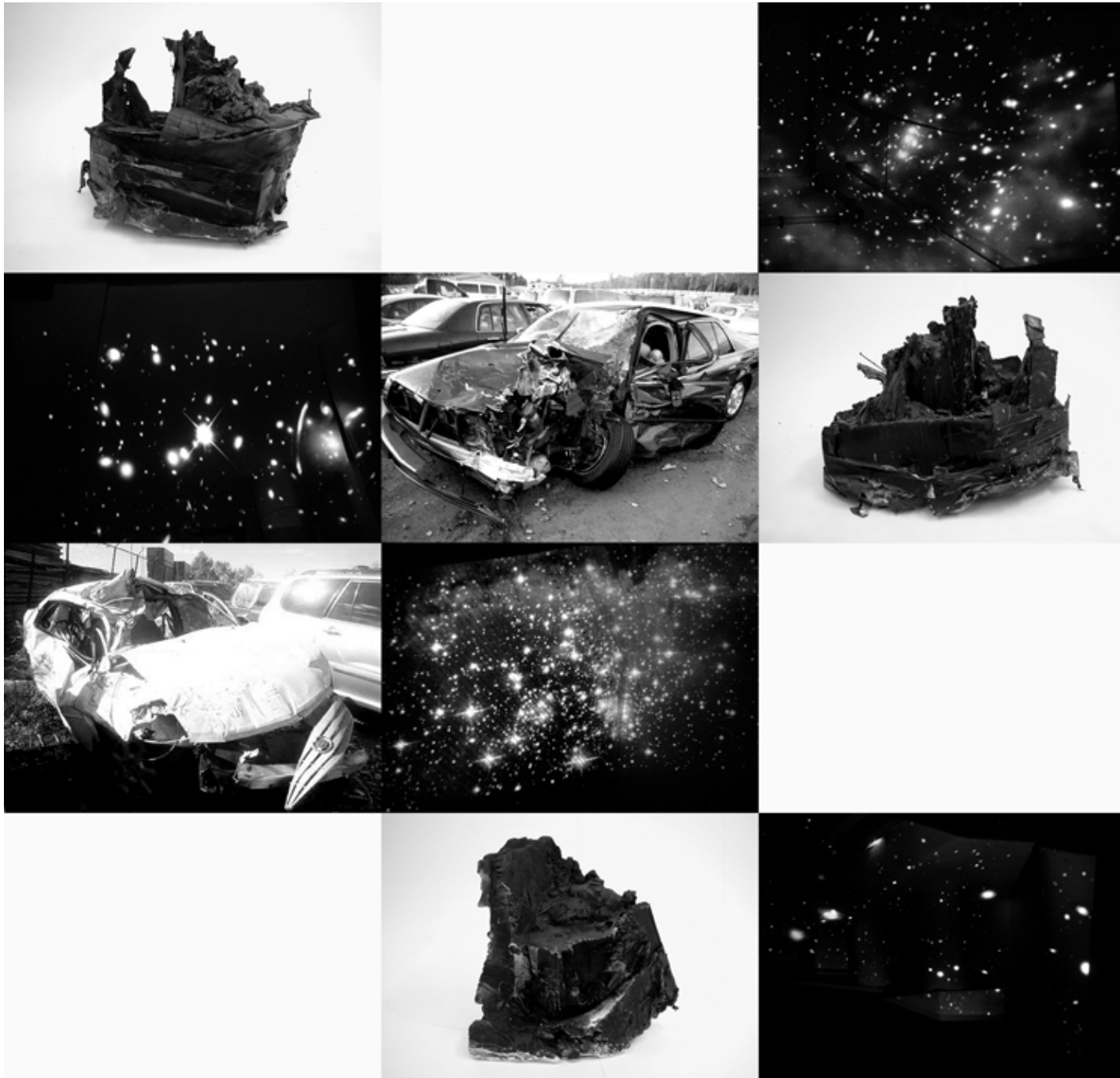






Installation detail SculptureCenter, NY, charcoal wall text





Multi-part wall collage (found images of crashed cars, deep space projections, cast sculptures), inkjet prints, each A3, overall dim variable





Sculpture, mixed media, ca. 40x40x40cm













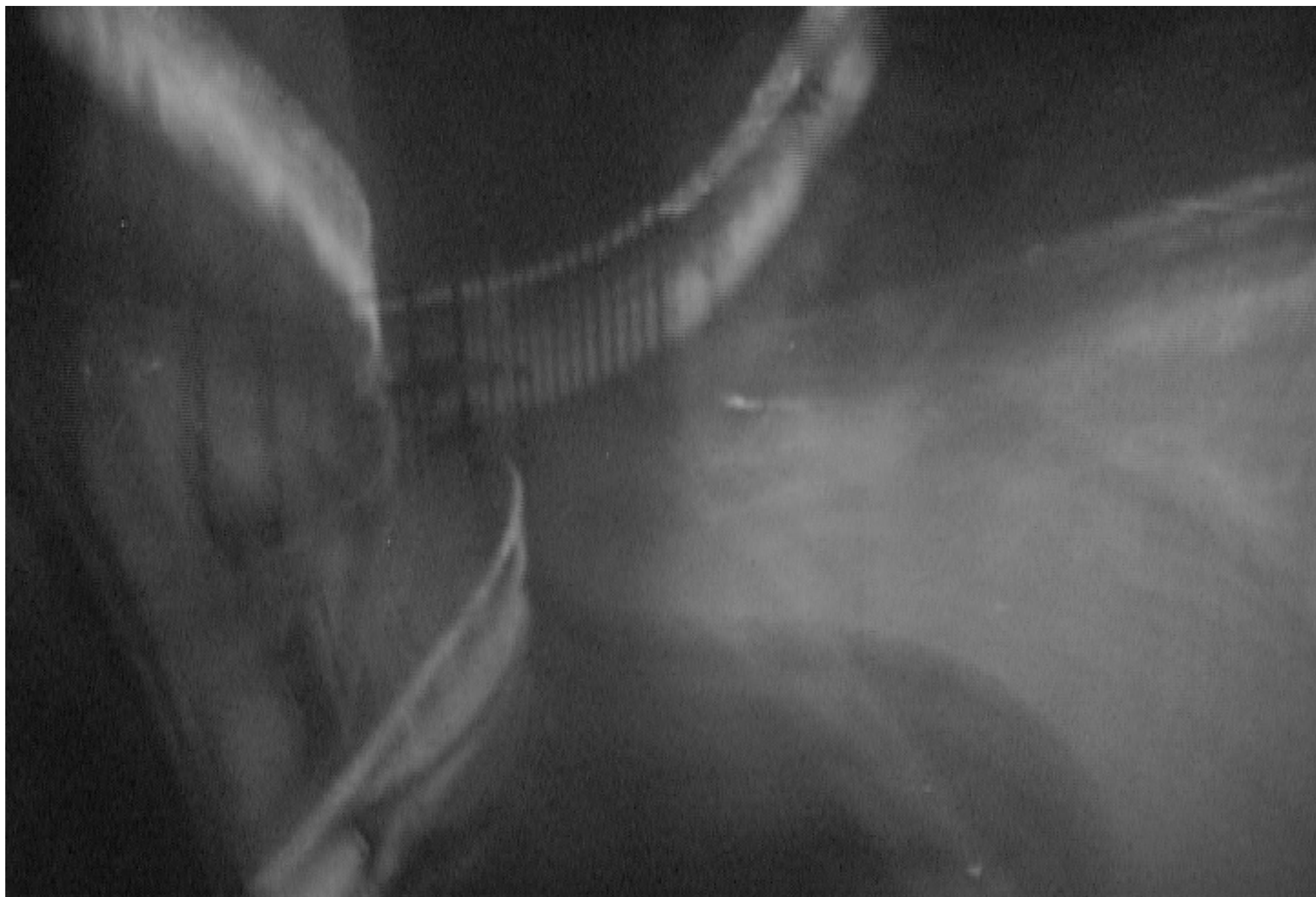
Deep space projection (from series), plot print, dim. var. ed. unlimited















Installation view (night), SculptureCenter NYC









## THE GHOST OF JAMES LEE BYARS CALLING

2006-7

Installation / performance, de Appel Center for Contemporary Art, Amsterdam (NL); Kapinos Galerie, Berlin (DE); Magnus Mueller Galerie, Berlin (DE); Arsenal, Lausanne (CH); BBB Centre d'Art, Toulouse (FR)

Various sculptural objects, charcoal drawings, fanzine, DVD, sound edition, P.I.M.D.W. performances with various Black Metal bands, poster editions

The Ghost of James Lee Byars Calling fuses the work of the internationally renowned performance and conceptual artist, James Lee Byars (1932-1997) with the underground realm of Black Metal music. Byars's dramatic flair and unconditional pursuit of "the essential" in form and concept parallel the dark theatricality of Black Metal and its characteristic idolization of pagan myths, satanism, violence and destruction. The project coincides with a recent discovery in the archives of de Appel: a large number of "official" letters and personal notes sent by James Lee Byars to Wies Smals, founder of de Appel, during the 1970s.

The title, The Ghost of James Lee Byars Calling, is taken from an exhibition by Byars in Los Angeles (1969). Byars was obsessed by his own mortality, which filters through in the minimal and ephemeral quality of his performances and installations. While enveloping the viewer in the utterly black atmosphere of nothingness, Smith's installation oscillates between Byars lyrical minimalism and the exaggerated gestures of Metal. Smith asked the Swedish Black Metal band Blodsrit to recreate a sound work by Byars, Perfect is My Death Word, during a concert in Berlin. A recording of this performance is part of the installation.

More than paying homage to Byars, the work is an invocation of cultural obsession with blackness and the staging of death. Byars's fascination with his own death was always a philosophical pursuit; the absence and transcendence communicated in his work were devoid of any notion of spiritual redemption. Preaching negation, Black Metal proclaims an outright rejection of Christian salvation with its celebrations of the demonic. The pairing does suggest a certain tongue-in-cheek stance towards the artist as shaman. Smith's work, however, is able to maintain this irony without discrediting the validity of a cultural drive towards death, although pop does seem to prevail. Byars talks of the perfect death, while the Black Metal icons Darkthrone scream: "Total Death." Byars's ghost may be calling, but Metal lives...(Laura Schleussner)



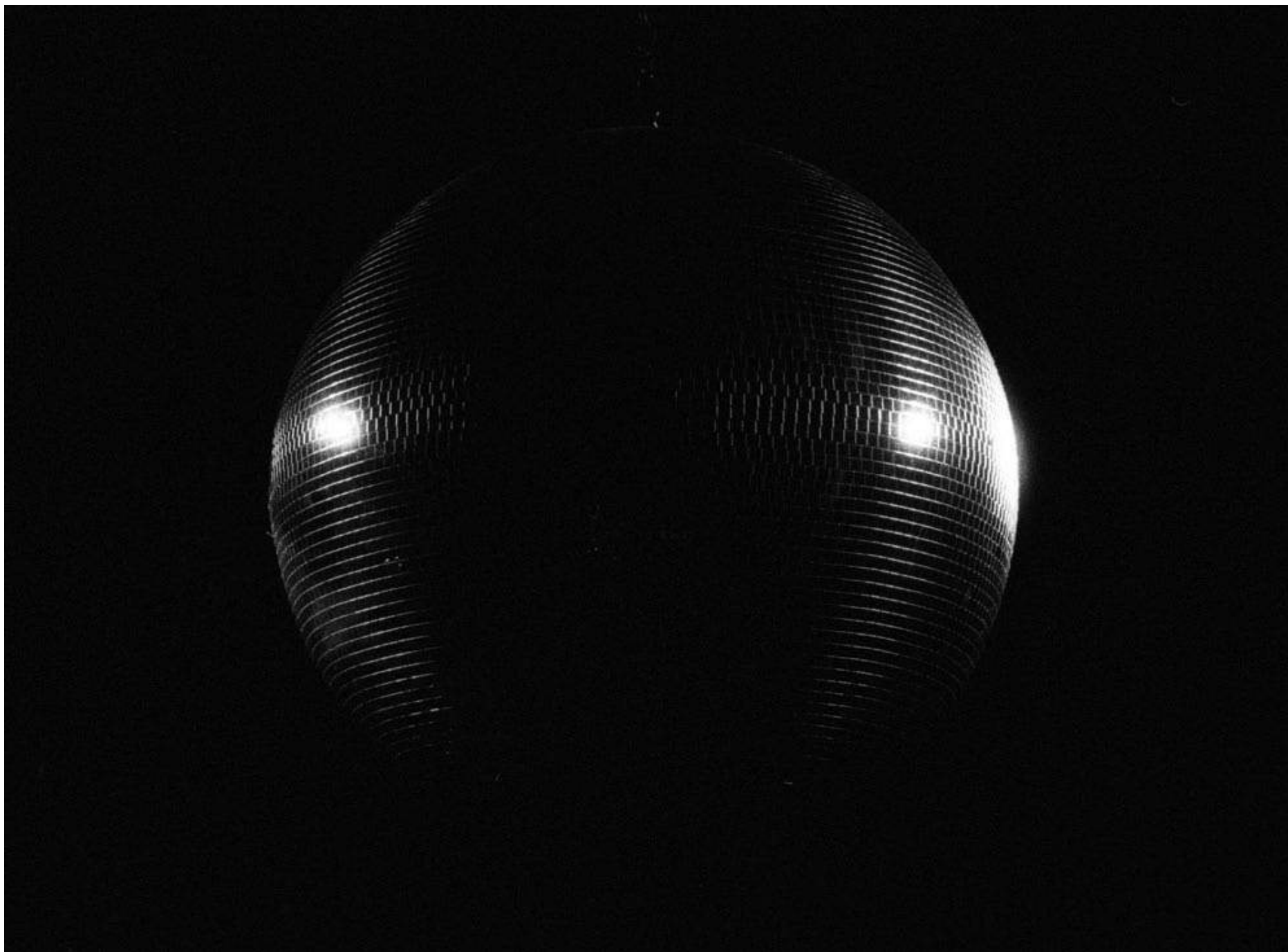


Installation view Kapinos Galerie, Berlin, 2006, black room, speakers, soundwork, framed works on paper, dims var.









Black mirror ball, black-surfaced stainless steel, motor, 75x75x75cm, de Appel Center Cont Art, NL

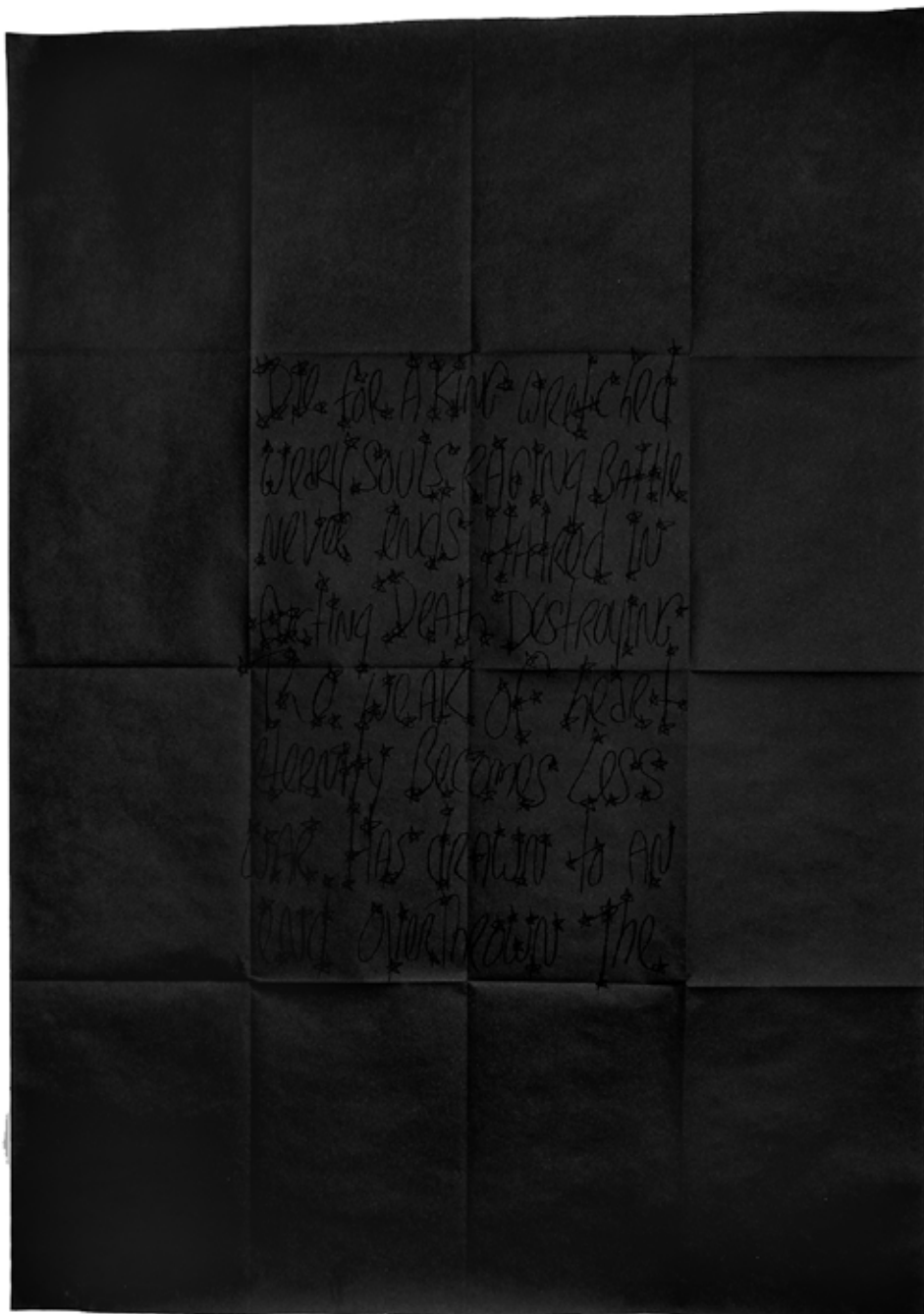




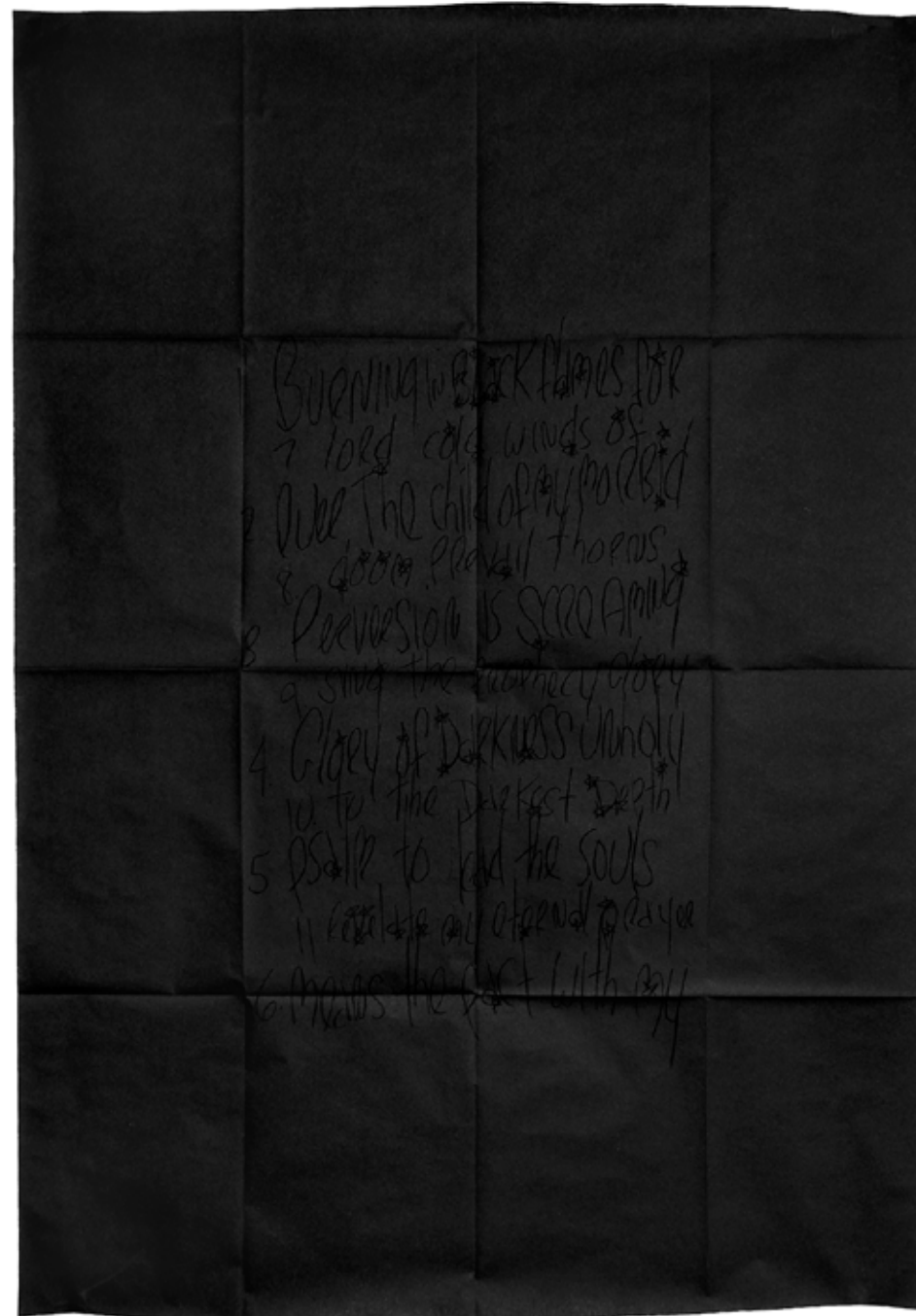


Drawings, charcoal on black tissue paper, de Appel Center Cont Art, NL

Dorn meiner Allmacht Christus Du  
süßer Verzucker eines unsauber schmecken an  
Blasse Könige des Armonnen in Stille des  
Freibienus Blut an du dein unsauber fleisch verzeiße  
ersticke an der Himmelt heines tot bringe nicken  
im jetzt tote das morgon verheissung letzter moloch dem  
Vormacht Nisses welches zu seinen Geförnt der  
Grabe zugeführt verabs mir meine Bloße Blut Heuchler im ich  
Auferstehung Hand sein wird Begraben in der

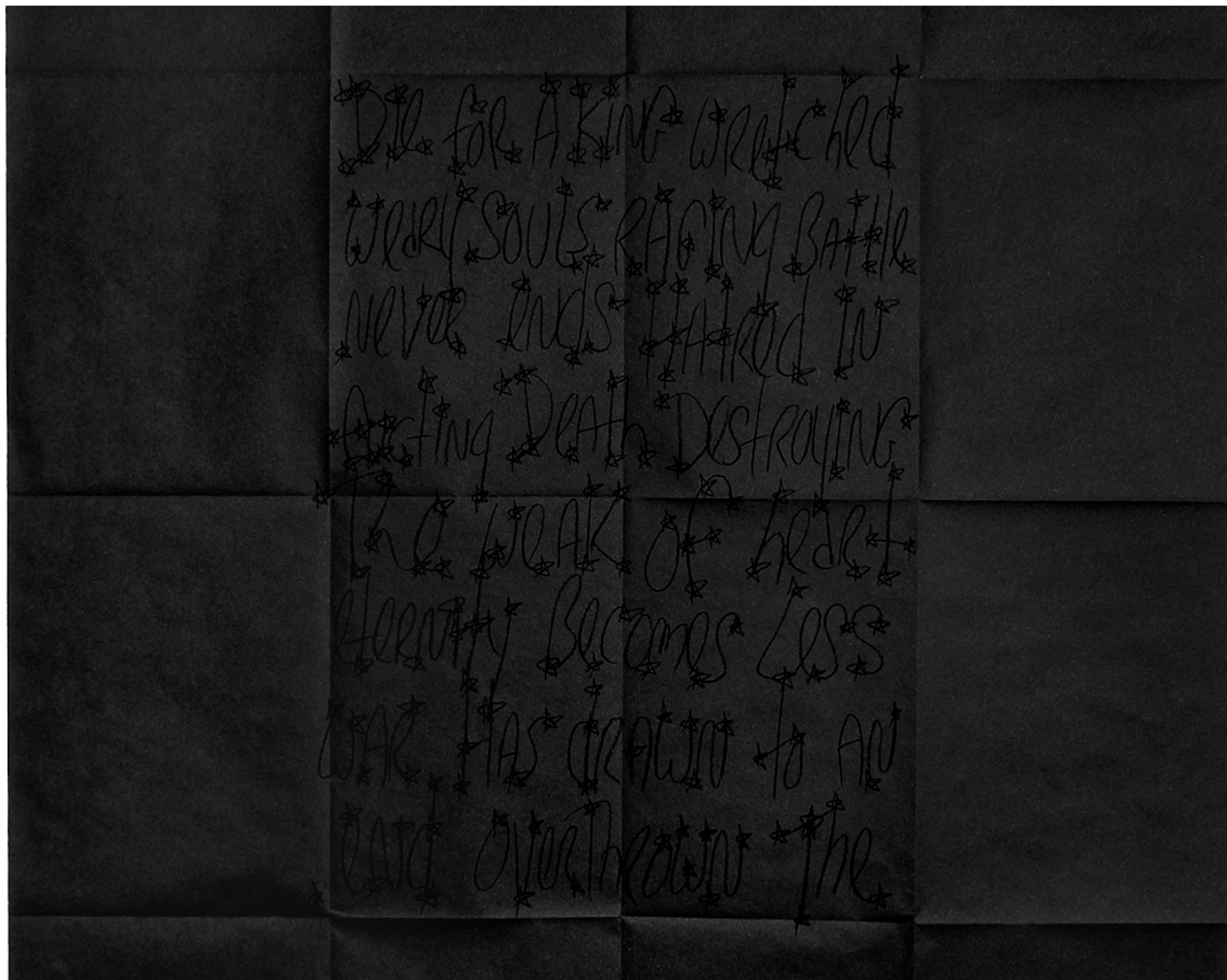


Die for a King (Absu) (2007), charcoal on tissue paper, 70x50cm, ed.1 + 1AP



Burning in Black Flames (Behemoth) (2007), charcoal on tissue paper, 70x50cm, ed.1 + 1AP





Die for a King (Absu) (2007), (detail), charcoal on tissue paper, 70x50cm, ed.1 + 1AP



Reference image, Byars performance, Amsterdam 1970s



Byars memorabilia, de Appel Center Cont. Art, NL 2007.



Sammath, de Appel Center Cont. Art, NL 2007.

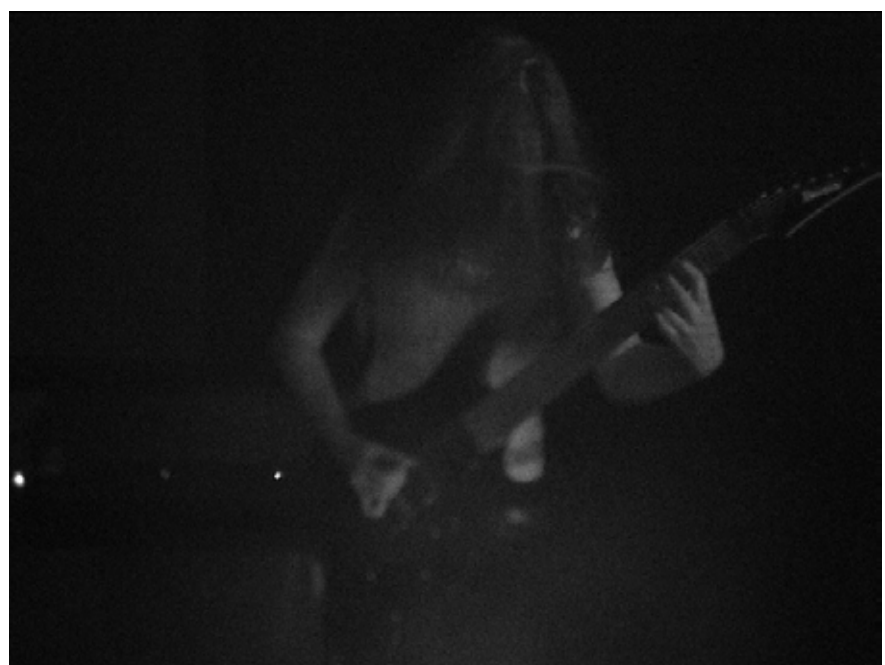




PERFECT IS MY DEATH WORD

Perfect Is My Death Word, DVD of Sammath performance, de Appel Center Cont. Art, NL 2007, trt 25:00min,





Sammath performing Perfect Is My Death Word, de Appel Center Cont. Art, NL 2007.



P.I.M.D.W. projection, 25:00min loop, Black Mirror, Arsenal, Lausanne CH, 2010



Perfect is My Death Word (Blodsrit), K17, Berlin, DE 2006



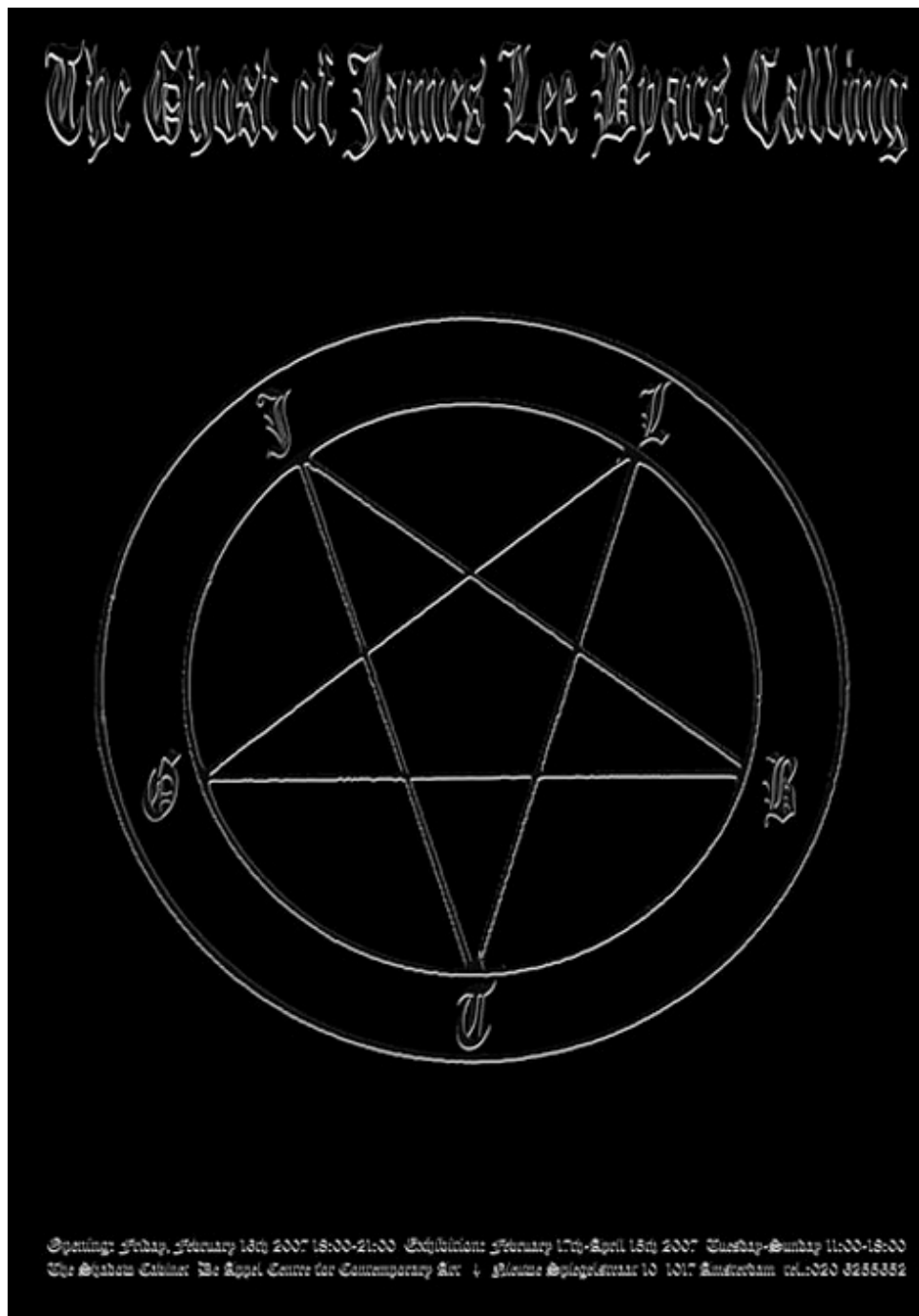
Perfect is My Death Word (Neithan, Magnus Mueller Galerie, Berlin, DE 2007

Perfect is My Death Word is a recreation of the James Lee Byars sound work of the same name. The original work was produced by Byars and the Neues Museum Weserberg Bremen in 1995 and exists as an edition on CD of 20 minutes of silence after which Byars simply says the sentence "Perfect is my death word." Smith asked Dutch Black Metal band Sammath to recreate the sound work by inserting the sentence into one of their original songs. Sammath performed Perfect is My Death Word at the De Appel Center for Contemporary Art in Amsterdam on February 16, 2007 for the opening of Smith's exhibition The Ghost of James Lee Byars Calling. DVD (trt 25:00min).

PIMDW was also performed on two other occasions by Swedish Black Metal band Blodsrit at K17 in Berlin in 2006, and by German Black Metal band Neithan at Magnus Mueller Galerie, Berlin on the occasion of the exhibition the Redistribution of the Sensible, 2007.

**>>WATCH DVD of Sammath performance at De Appel: <https://vimeo.com/116773027>**

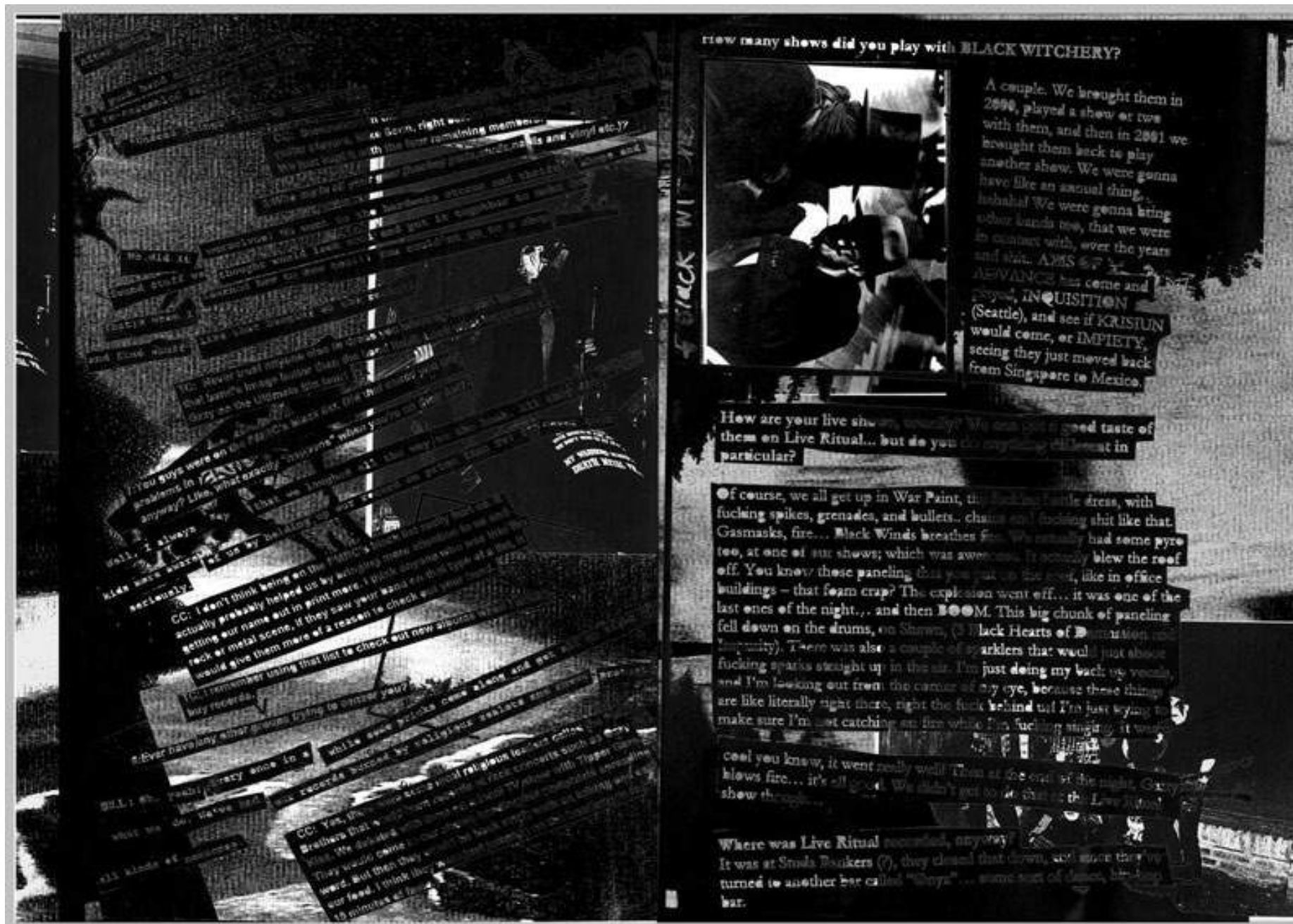




Poster edition, 84x60cm, b&w offset print, ed. 100



T.G.J.L.B.C. fanzine collage (Behemoth & Byars), A4, photocopy, ed. 66



T.G.J.L.B.C. fanzine collage (Byars and Beuys), A4, photocopy, ed. 66



Poster edition, 60x84cm, b&w offset print, ed. 100







## **WHITE NOISE**

1999

Installation, Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco, CA (US)

Hand-cast records, record jackets, turntables, headphones, display shelf, flyer edition

Playable hand-cast polyurethane plastic records of popular albums from the 1970s, 80s and 90s.

The records are modified during the casting process to yield random, repetition-based distortions. As source material well-known, overplayed albums were used. Each record side features a different artist and is loosely paired according to genre: Led Zepplin/The Doors, Madonna/Michael Jackson, Boston/Genesis ect. Each record side contains only half the original sonic material (molded twice and cast together) to form one continuous playable surface. Nine unique double-sided records produced with artist designed and fabricated white modular display unit, “ready-bought” turntable and headphones. Edition of 6 each.





Installation view, Rena Bransten Gallery, records, record jackets, turntables, headphones, display units, 1999



Installation detail, Rena Bransten Gallery, hand-cast records, turntables, shelves, dims var.



Individual display unit, nine hand-cast records, turntable, headphones, (80x45x150cm), ed.6





Hand-cast record (each side unique artist), jacket sleeve, 33x33cm, ed. 6



>Sample track A: <https://vimeo.com/125498767>

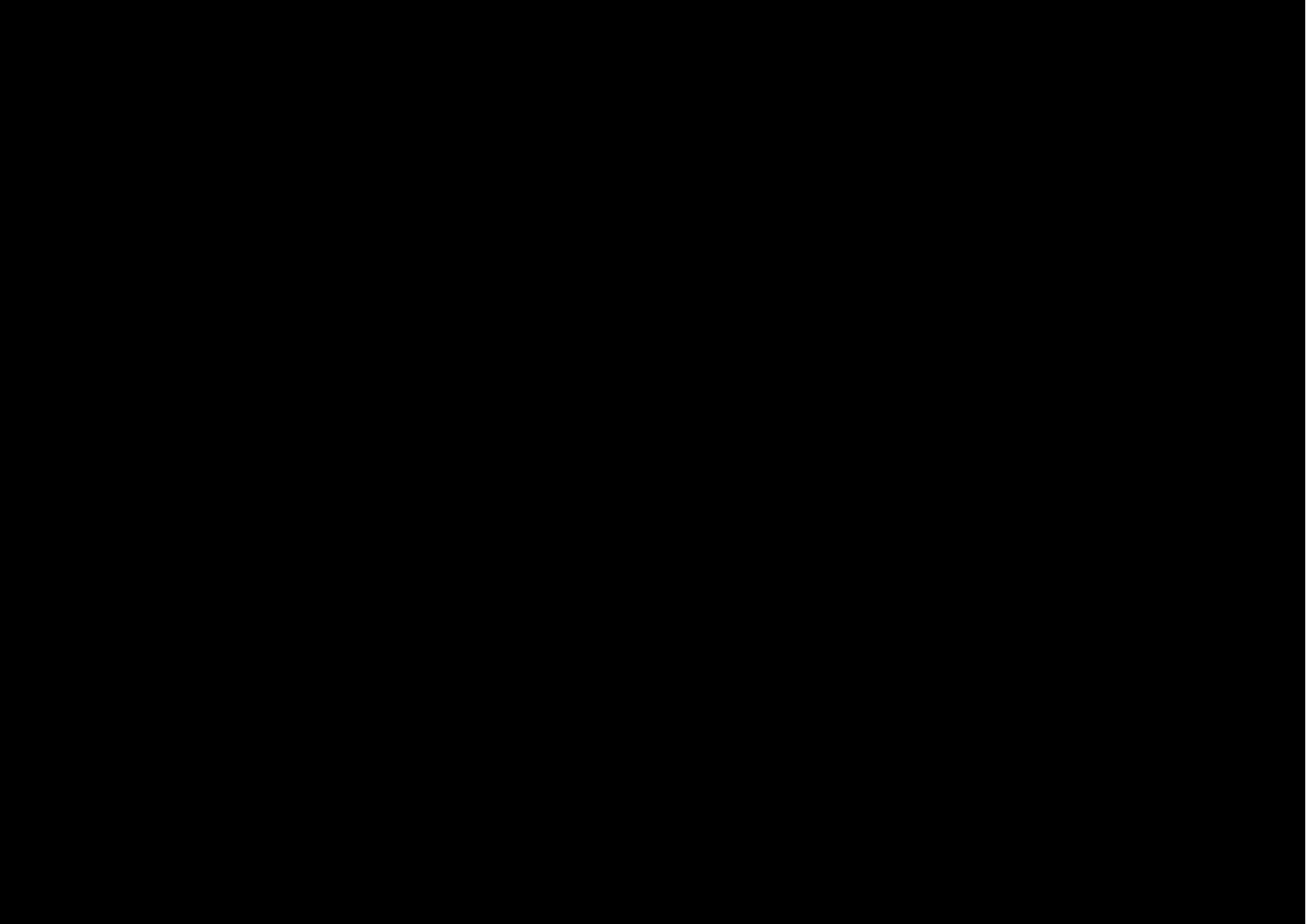
>Sample track B: <https://vimeo.com/125498768>

>Sample track C: <https://vimeo.com/125498769>



White Noise, exhibition announcement, 10x15cm, offset color press, ed. of 300







## ANYTOWN

1999

Installation, Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco, CA (US)

Vacuum-formed suburban zoning map system, six unique tiles, each 45x45cm

A hand-designed, mass-produced, vacuum-formed plastic urban zoning relief map. Derived from actual Northern California zoning maps, the layout of any sized overall plan is composed of six basic inter-connecting 45x45cm square tiles. The overall design varies according to predictability and chance. Unlimited edition (displayed in groups of 9, 18, 36, 72).

Anytown is a neat swipe at land use planning and a comic remembrance of minimal sculpture. Smith has made 18-inch squares of pale yellow plastic embossed with low relief that denotes snaking streets and chockablock housing units. The plastic plaques come in six distinct patterns worked out so well that, placed edge to edge, they connect in any configuration. Their array can extend indefinitely in all directions. The town-planning vision Anytown evokes is a nightmare of deadening redundancy, not unlike what we see in parts of San Francisco. Besides being an anti-utopian vision of suburban growth, Anytown reflects wryly on the square plate floor sculptures of Carl Andre, classics of minimalism. It recalls Andre's famous statement that "my idea of a piece of sculpture is a road." In their reductive logic, Andre's floor pieces were intended to be critical of how the world is arranged. Smith's Anytown hints that by revising Andre's works as relief sculpture it uncovers the world order implicit in minimalism. (Kenneth Baker)

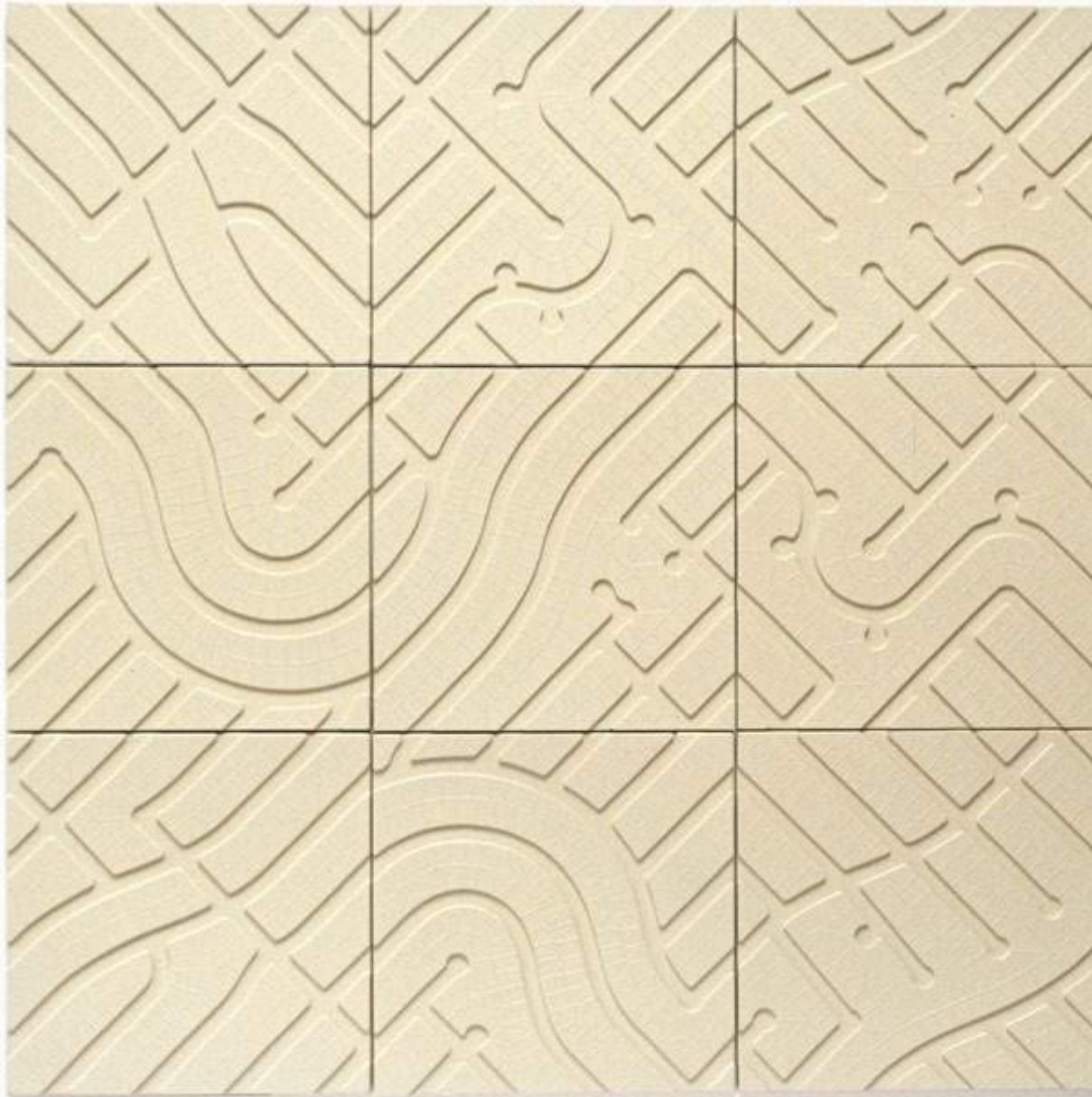




Anytown, installation view, Rena Bransten Gallery, SF, overall dim var., unlimited ed.



Anytown, installation view, SF



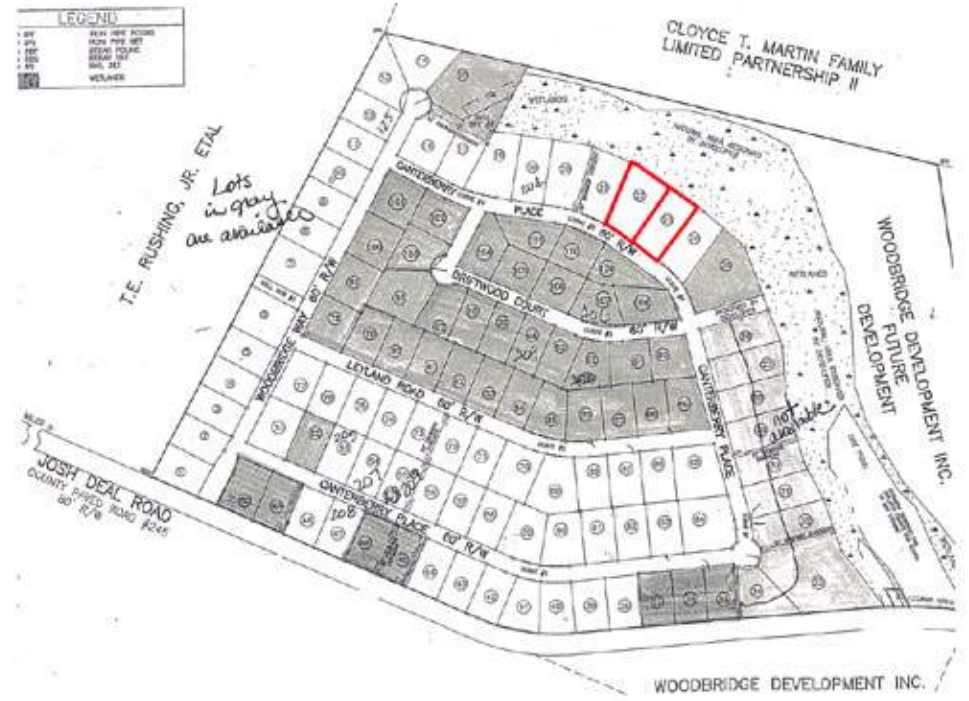
Anytown, 9-unit edition, each 45 x 45 cm, overall 135 x135 cm, unlimited ed.





Anytown, detail view, each unit 45 x 45 cm, unlimited ed.





Reference images: subdivision; zoning map







**ERIK SMITH** (US), lives and works in Berlin DE

### **Solo Exhibitions**

- 2016 De Appel Arts Centre, Amsterdam, NL, From the Archive - LocusSolus: Erik Smith
- 2015 Errant Bodies, AABBCCDV (redux Berlin), Berlin, DE
- 2013 die raum, Berlin, DE, Die Räume
- 2012 DimensionsVariable, Miami (FL), US, AABBCCDV
- 2011 Skulpturenpark Berlin\_Zentrum, Berlin, DE, Test Dig No.1
- 2007 De Appel Arts Centre, Amsterdam, NL, The Ghost of James Lee Byars Calling
- 2006 Kapinos Galerie, Berlin, DE, The Ghost of James Lee Byars Calling
- 2004 Zentralbuero, Berlin, DE, F.L.E.
- 1999 Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco (CA), US, New Conceptual Sculpture
- 1997 Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco (CA), US, Some Assembly Required

### **Group Exhibitions**

- 2017 Fragmenta, Malta (upcoming)
- 2017 Spor Klübü, Berlin DE, The Real Estate Show Extended (upcoming)
- 2016 BBB centre d'art, Toulouse, FR, Freux Follet
- 2016 Bar Babette, Berlin DE, On Site in 16 Cities
- 2015 Spor Klübü, Berlin DE, You knee them in the chin...!
- 2015 Errant Bodies, Berlin DE, What is the sound of protest?
- 2014 Spor Klübü, Berlin DE, IWF Moerdertreff
- 2013 Spor Klübü, Berlin DE, REMIX
- 2012 Spor Klübü, Berlin DE, Cocaine Blows My Brain
- 2012 Temporary Home 2012, Kassel, DE, Home in Crisis
- 2012 Kulturpark Berlin, DE, Radio Days
- 2012 Stedefreund, Berlin, DE, Space Release #3 – What I predict to remember what I predict to forget
- 2011 Tape Modern, Berlin, DE, Navigating Darkness
- 2011 servtag GmbH, Berlin, DE, Berlin Verstehen
- 2011 ExRotaprint, Berlin, DE, Weak Heart Drop
- 2011 Pink Gallery, Berlin, DE, Emblem of Modernity
- 2010 Bauer & Ewald, Berlin, DE, Weil' auf mir du dunkles Auge
- 2010 The Woodmill, London, UK, P.A.S.T. Projects
- 2010 Arsenic, Lausanne, Switzerland, Black Mirror – cur. Marco Costantini (cat.)
- 2010 Armory Show, NYC, US, INPUT: Me, Myself and I (Conversations with Oneself) (cat.)
- 2009 211 Elizabeth Street, NYC, US, Exhibition
- 2008 SculptureCenter, LIC (NY), US, In Practice Projects - cur. Sarina Basta
- 2008 Ruimte X, ZXZW Independent Culture, Tilburg, NL, Svart Kunststykke
- 2008 Pierogi Brooklyn/Leipzig - Artforum Berlin
- 2008 Scryption Museum voor schriftelijke communicatie, Tilburg NL, The Ghost of James Lee Byars Calling: Drawings
- 2007 Magnus Mueller Gallery, Berlin, DE, The Re-distribution of the Sensible - cur. W. Neidich

2007 Pierogi Brooklyn/Leipzig - Artforum Berlin, DE  
 2007 Kapinos Galerie, Berlin, DE, The Best of Show  
 2007 ArtNews Projects, Berlin, DE, Pierogi - Flatfiling  
 2006 Gutleut 15, Frankfurt am Main, DE, Me, Myself and I 2  
 2005 Kapinos Galerie, Berlin, DE, News from the Studios  
 2005 Berliner Kunstsalon 02, Berlin, DE, FTV://berlinvideotalks - with Pirate Cinema and V2V  
 2005 Glue, Berlin, DE; Konsortium, Düsseldorf, DE; Gutleut 15, Frankfurt am Main, DE; Galerie Hobbyshop, München, DE; Arti, Amsterdam, NL, Me, Myself and I  
 2005 Glue, Berlin, DE, Extraglue Editionen Dauerhaft Ausstellung  
 2004 Brotfabrik, Berlin, DE, Architektur und Film Festival 04  
 2004 Rocket Shop, Berlin, DE, Utopia U build it - cur. Laura Schleussner  
 2000 Contemporary Museum, Baltimore (ML), US, Snapshot  
 1998 Rena Bransten Gallery - ArtFrankfurt98, Frankfurt am Main, DE  
 1997 Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco (CA), US, Pool  
 1996 Rena Bransten Gallery - The Gramercy Int. Art Fair, Los Angeles (CA), US  
 1996 Four Walls Gallery, San Francisco (CA), US, Glean - cur. Julie Deamer  
 1996 Anthony Meier Fine Arts - FIAC, Paris, FR

### **Performances**

2007 Magnus Mueller Gallery, Berlin, DE, Perfect is My Death Word - with Neithan  
 2007 De Appel Contemporary Art Centre, The Shadow Cabinet, Amsterdam, NL, Perfect is My Death Word - with Sammath  
 2006 K17, Berlin, DE, Perfect is My Death Word - with Blodsrit

### **Residencies/Awards**

2015 Headlands Center for the Arts, finalist, Marin, CA  
 2012 Cannonball / LegalArt Visiting Artist Residency, Miami, FL  
 2011 Expodium: Kanaleneiland, Utrecht, NL  
 2008 Artist in Residence, ZXZW Festival for Independent Culture, Tilburg, NL  
 2000 SECA Finalist, SFMOMA, San Francisco, CA

### **Talks/Screenings**

2015 Errant Bodies, AABBCCDV (Redux Berlin), Berlin, DE, with Jeremiah Day  
 2012 Variable Discourse, AABBCCDV, Miami FL, with Chris Cook and Adler Guerrier

### **Curatorial Projects**

2010 Weil' auf mir du dunkles Auge with Mario Asef, Jeremiah Day, Klara Hobza, Daniel Seiple and Erik Smith. Oct 23 – Dec 11, 2010. Bauer & Ewald, Berlin-NeuKoelln. [www.eriksmith.de/Dunkles\\_Auge/description.html](http://www.eriksmith.de/Dunkles_Auge/description.html)



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