



nara roesler

**carlos bunga**  
inhabiting together  
nara roesler são paulo

**opening**  
february 24

**exhibition**  
feb 24 – apr 20, 2024

**carlos bunga**  
inhabiting together  
ivo mesquita

My project is a kind of architecture; it's not a real space, but a mental landscape, a projection of something. When we walk in that space we are walking between the past and the future and we are the present.

—Carlos Bunga, MAAT, Lisboa, 2021

Born in Porto, to a family that had recently migrated following the end of the colonial wars in Portuguese Africa (1961–74), Carlos Bunga draws the founding condition of his poetic project from his foreign origin. Known for his ambitious site-specific installations and performances, which require him to move regularly between different spaces, places, and cultures, Bunga works like a nomad. He carries his home, a concept present in various projects, his shelter, anywhere, along with his accumulated experiences with the relationship between the natural and human landscape through the practice of notions of common sense. Nothing academic, just curiosity and intuition. 'In my work process, I feel closer to a bird building its nest than to an architect,' says the artist. He is not surprised by the provisional nature of the work.

Among the most original and consistent artists of his generation, Bunga's production constitutes a solid body of work and thought. His form and strategy move between painting, sculpture, architecture, design, and performance, fusing them in ephemeral constructions of cardboard and adhesive tape; with rustic paintings, collages, and assemblages; and through scattered objects collected and/or elaborated *in situ*. He creates a room within another room, with new internal

dimensions and an improvised and temporary construction that confronts/mirrors the original architecture. A more intimate, silent space emerges – an atmosphere of expectation that offers another possibility of perception to the physical and associative performance of the public inside. It's something precarious, reminiscent of popular architectural models, makeshift shelters in the streets, or abandoned ruins. Carlos does a kind of urban archaeology of the contemporary. Through its forms and traces, its people, movements, and memories, he reveals the beauty of ordinary things. The work is guided, on the one hand, by experimentation with form, color, space, and matter. On the other, it seeks to give visibility to the burning issues of contemporaneity: citizenship, housing, public spaces, mobility, work, and visibility.

Trained in painting, which forms the basis of his plastic thinking, his practice expands the medium into space building an interior landscape of the present time, and with this, sets in motion, and problematizes, the different layers of signifiers and issues that make up life itself: the city, the houses, the shops, the social dynamics, migrants of all kinds, languages, and narratives. Carlos arrives at a place and circulates, collects, finds, and accumulates. He investigates the emotional landscape that constructs urban spaces and how they are used; he questions architecture codes, destabilizing notions of order, solidity, and permanence. He doesn't have a project *a priori*. The work is built in living this process, when the gallery or museum is taken as a laboratory, seeking not a standard or index but rather delirious plurality.

In the artist's first solo show at Nara Roesler, he presents a series of works created following his trip to Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, and Brazil last year, where he had been and has exhibited several times. Starting with the series of paintings on carpets, *New Maps*, 2024, which feature an abstract cartography, not only as a reference to the artist's real and mental journeys, but also as a redesign of the world with decoloniality, the migratory flows of workers, wars, climate disasters, refugees, and marginalized people at all latitudes. The series of paintings made in São Paulo, *Construcción pictórica. Naturaleza*, 2023, also refer to the notion of place. This time, they take on a more poetic and abstract character with surfaces that utilize pigments, resins, plant branches, dried leaves, garbage from the streets, and other various fragments frozen on a plane as a kind of urban still life – a record of the passage of time and nature – intertwined by the artist's gestures. Although autonomous, the paintings sometimes function as walls installed in the exhibition space. Lastly, Carlos builds a room in the center of the gallery with a floor made from cardboard boxes, an ironic reference to the asceticism and precision of the grid in historical minimalism. In it, the public is encouraged to walk through the work and draw their path to reach another space, encouraging thoughts about geographical, social, and cultural territories and, above all, about inhabiting space. But also about the fragility or loss of it all.

Particularly impressed by Bolivia's new social and cultural reality in the wake of progressive and popular governments over the last 20 years, Carlos recorded signs of political and economic empowerment of native cultures and traditions. The seven drawings from the *Mutation, Andean Architecture* series, 2023–24, show the architecture linked to the emerging Aimarás bourgeoisie, which in its grandiose and extravagant form, with patterns from the eclecticism of the *novecento*, with the futurism of electronic games and decorative elements from the Tiahuanaco culture, flourishes in the city of El Alto, affirming its Andean origins in opposition to the globalized modernism of middle-class and bourgeois neighborhoods of La Paz, 600 meters below.

Through the work bag with the label 'artist,' *Informality and unemployment*, 2024, Carlos stands in solidarity with informal workers, the daily migrants from the outskirts to the centers of big cities in search of work, always carrying their tools: painters, carpenters, plumbers, bricklayers, nurses, and others, as well as unknown artists, marginalized from the art system. In today's world, with robotization and artificial intelligence, the exploitation of labor and neoliberal greed have made working relationships more precarious and increased unemployment, affecting everyone, with or without training. The series of photographs of the streets of La Paz, by the same title, relate to this new reality. The issues of economic and social

inequality, disparity in access to services, resources, opportunities, and technology are also referred to in the work *Cagar na lata*, 2024, in a clear reference to the work *Artist's Shit*, 1961, by Italian conceptual artist Piero Manzoni (1933–1963). But unlike the latter, who criticized the institutional circuit of artistic production, Carlos speaks directly about homeless people and communities without sanitary services: how can we still live with this considering the accumulated wealth and technological advances in the world we live in?

Although they are not included in the exhibition, Carlos likes to draw birds and watch them, fascinated by the possibility of flying. The video *Vista de pássaro. El Alto/La Paz*, 2023–24, is like a flight over the city of La Paz, Bolivia, filmed at a height of more than 4,000 meters from a cable car cabin on the aerial metro, the most efficient and functional system for mobility in that capital. The work is an example of the disorderly and marginalized growth on the outskirts of large Latin American cities. For a moment we gain the perspective of a condor and of migratory birds, those that know no borders. Carlos thinks of a utopia: even if the future is one of ruins, being there will always be worthwhile, because there will always be something to do and, perhaps then, we will have learned to inhabit together.

artist's studio  
São Paulo, 2023



Construcción pictórica.  
Naturaleza #13, 2023  
PVA glue, latex paint  
and dry leaves on plywood  
202 x 152 x 6 cm  
79.5 x 59.8 x 2.4 in







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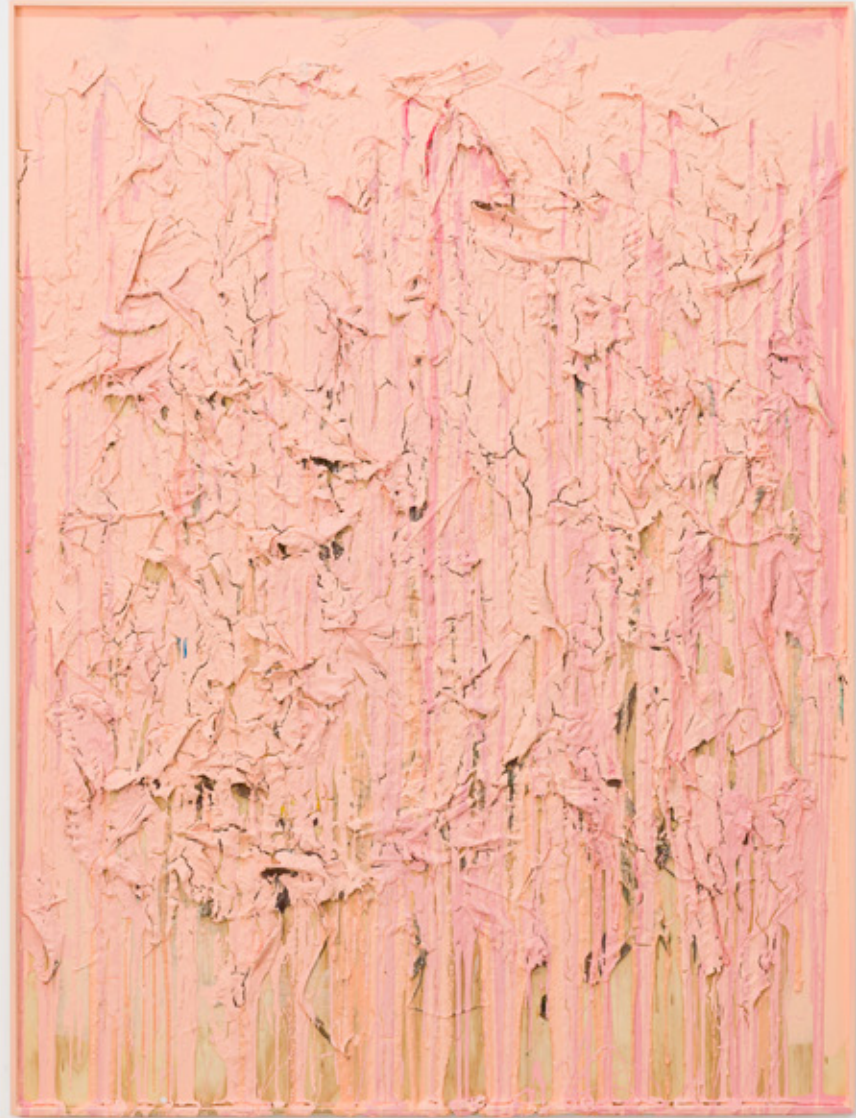
*Construcción pictórica.*  
*Naturaleza #14, 2023*  
PVA glue, latex paint and  
dry leaves on plywood  
202 x 152,5 x 7 cm  
79.5 x 60 x 2.8 in



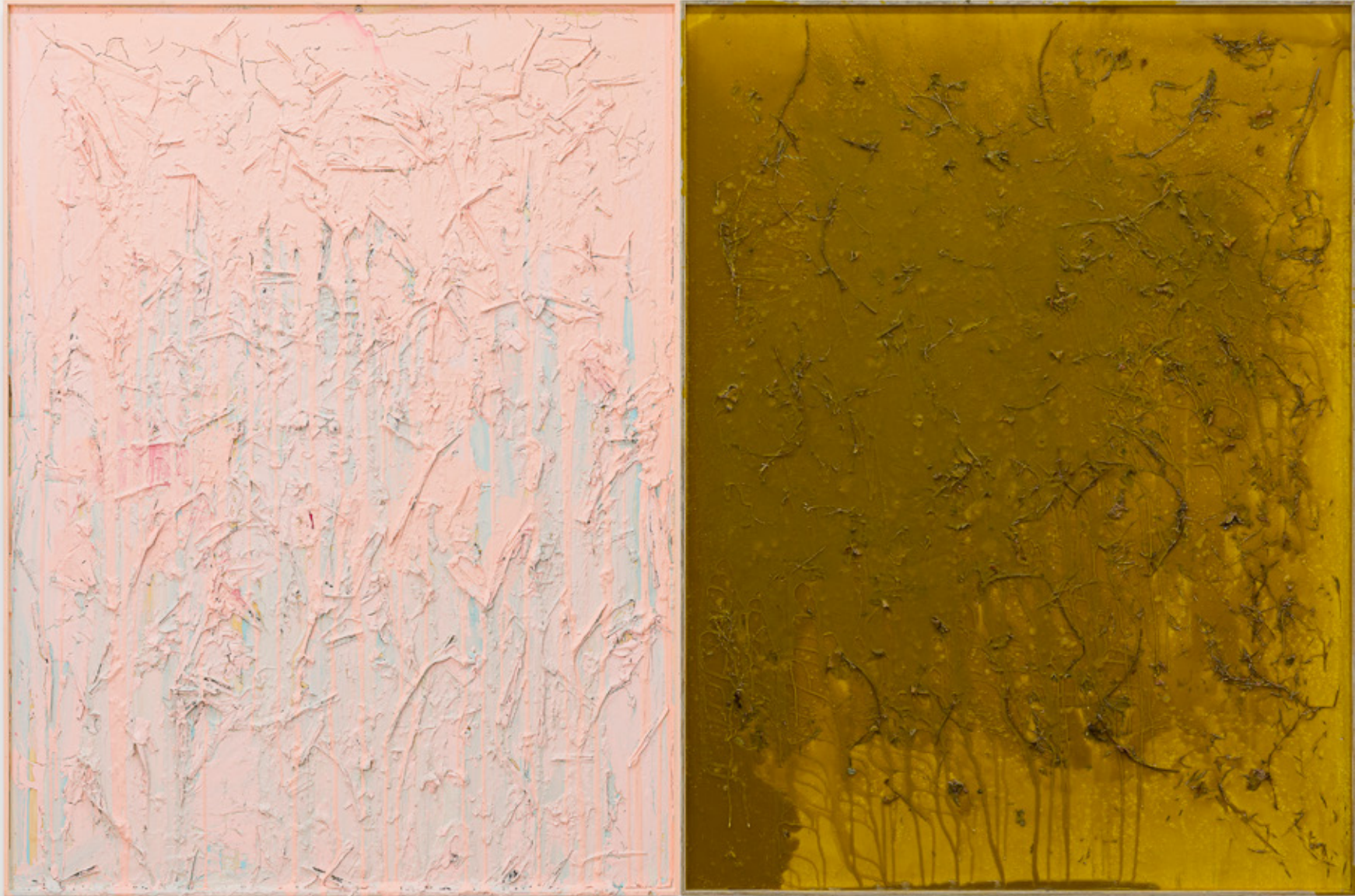


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*Construcción pictórica.*  
*Naturaleza #15, 2023*  
PVA glue, latex paint and  
dry leaves on plywood  
202 x 152 x 6 cm  
79.5 x 59.8 x 2.4 in







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*Landscape #8, 2023*  
PVA glue, latex paint and  
dry leaves on plywood  
204 x 153 x 5 cm cada  
79,7 x 60 x 2,4 in each







exhibition view  
*Inhabiting together*, 2024  
Galeria Nara Roesler,  
São Paulo, Brazil



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exhibition view  
*Mind Awake, Body Asleep*, 2022  
Secession, Vienna, Austria, 2021  
photo: Julia Kronberger



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installation view  
*Habitar el color*  
35<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Biennial, São Paulo, Brazil



*Landscape #9, 2023*  
beeswax, PVA glue, latex paint  
and dry leaves on plywood  
204 x 153 x 5 cm cada  
79,7 x 60 x 2,4 each







Construcción pictórica.  
Naturaleza #17, 2023  
PVA glue, latex paint  
and dry leaves on plywood  
260 x 150,5 x 10 cm  
102.4 x 59.3 x 3.9 in

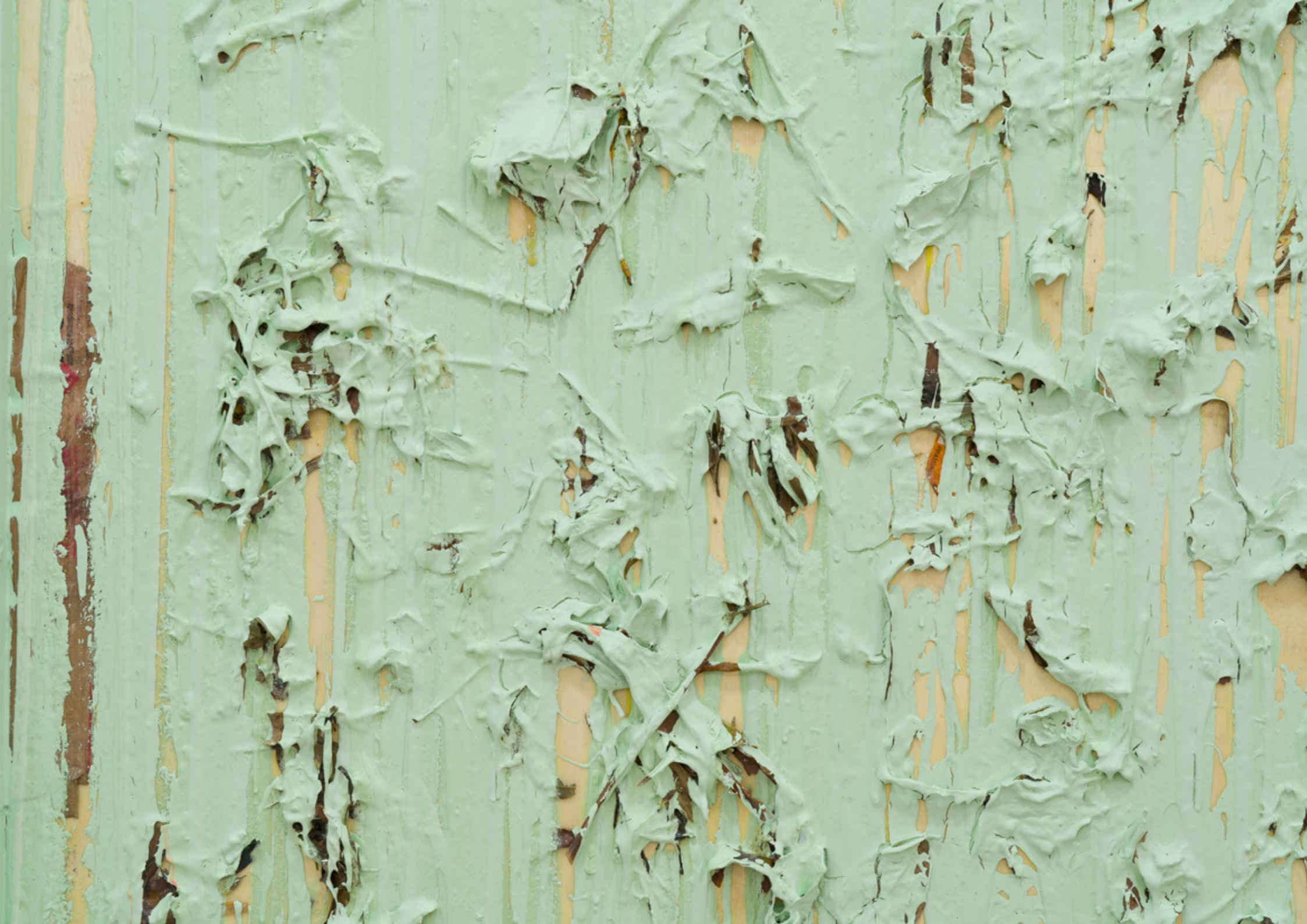




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*Construcción pictórica.*  
*Naturaleza #19, 2023*  
PVA glue, latex paint and  
dry leaves on plywood  
260 x 146,5 x 8 cm  
102.4 x 57.7 x 3.1 in





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*Construcción pictórica.*  
*Naturaleza #18, 2023*  
PVA glue, latex paint and  
dry leaves on plywood  
260 x 150,5 x 10 cm  
102.4 x 59.3 x 3.9 in









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*Silla castigada #3*, 2023  
PVA glue and  
latex paint on chair  
88 x 46 x 48 cm  
34.6 x 18.1 x 18.9 in







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*O mundo ao contrário*, 2023  
PVA glue and latex paint on chair  
96 x 51 x 48 cm  
37.8 x 20.1 x 18.9 in



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*New maps #8, 2023*  
PVC glue and latex paint on carpet  
Ø 150 cm  
Ø 59 in







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*Free Standing Painting #61*, 2023  
PVC glue and latex paint on blanket  
9 x 50 x 40 cm  
3.5 x 19.7 x 15.7 in

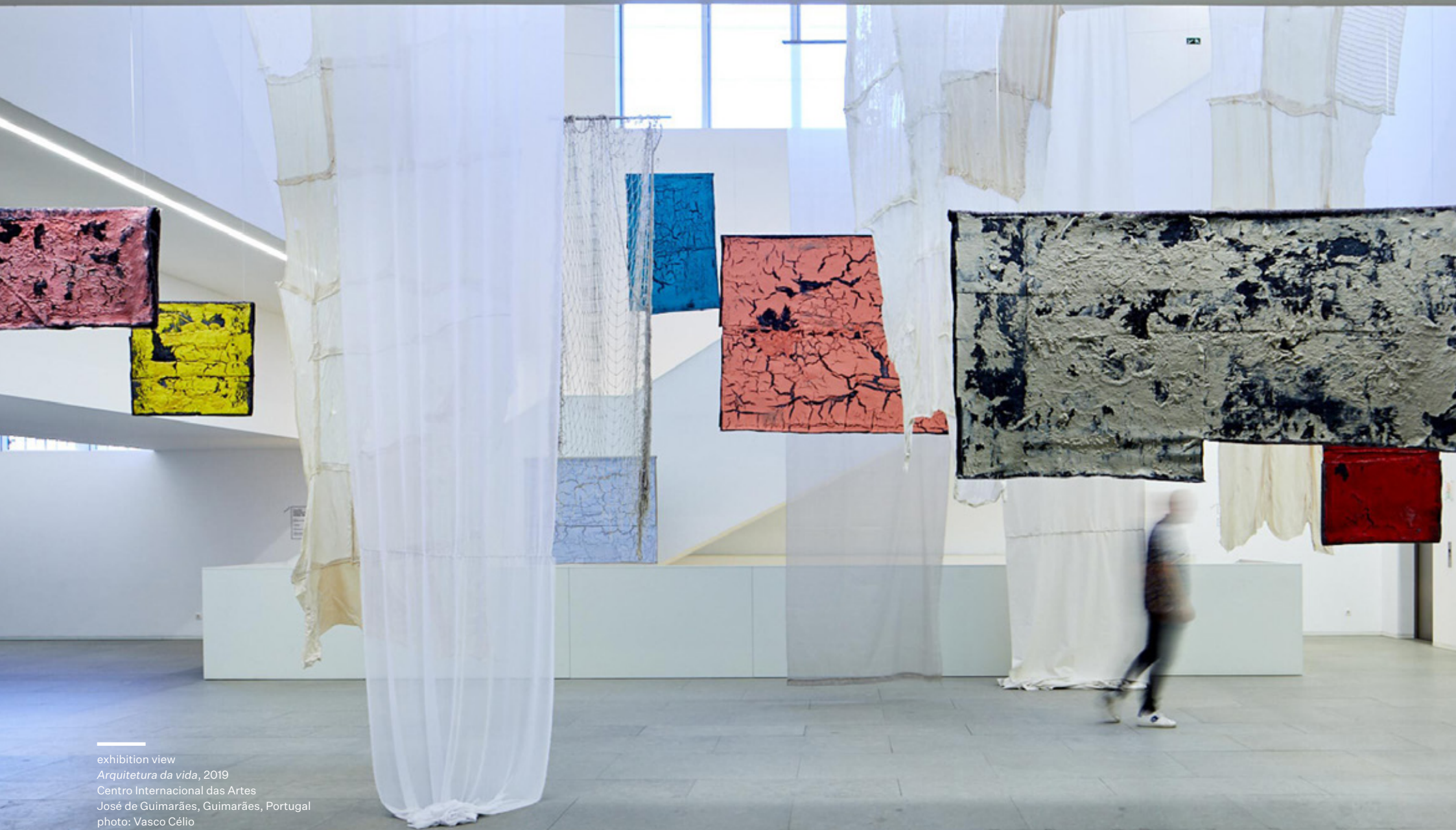




Free Standing Painting #62 , 2023  
PVC glue and latex paint on blanket  
7 x 51 x 44 cm  
2.8 x 20.1 x 17.3 in







exhibition view  
*Arquitetura da vida*, 2019  
Centro Internacional das Artes  
José de Guimarães, Guimarães, Portugal  
photo: Vasco Célio



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*Free Standing Painting #63*, 2023  
PVC glue and latex paint on blanket  
82 x 50 x 4 cm  
32.3 x 19.7 x 1.6 in

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*New maps #1, 2023*  
PVC glue and latex paint on carpet  
65 x 72 x 5 cm  
25.6 x 28.3 x 2 in









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*New maps #2, 2023*  
PVC glue and latex paint  
on carpet  
61 x 89 x 1,5 cm  
24 x 35 x 0.6 in



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*New maps #3, 2023*  
PVC glue and latex paint on carpet  
94 x 148 x 1,5 cm  
37 x 58.3 x 0.6 in







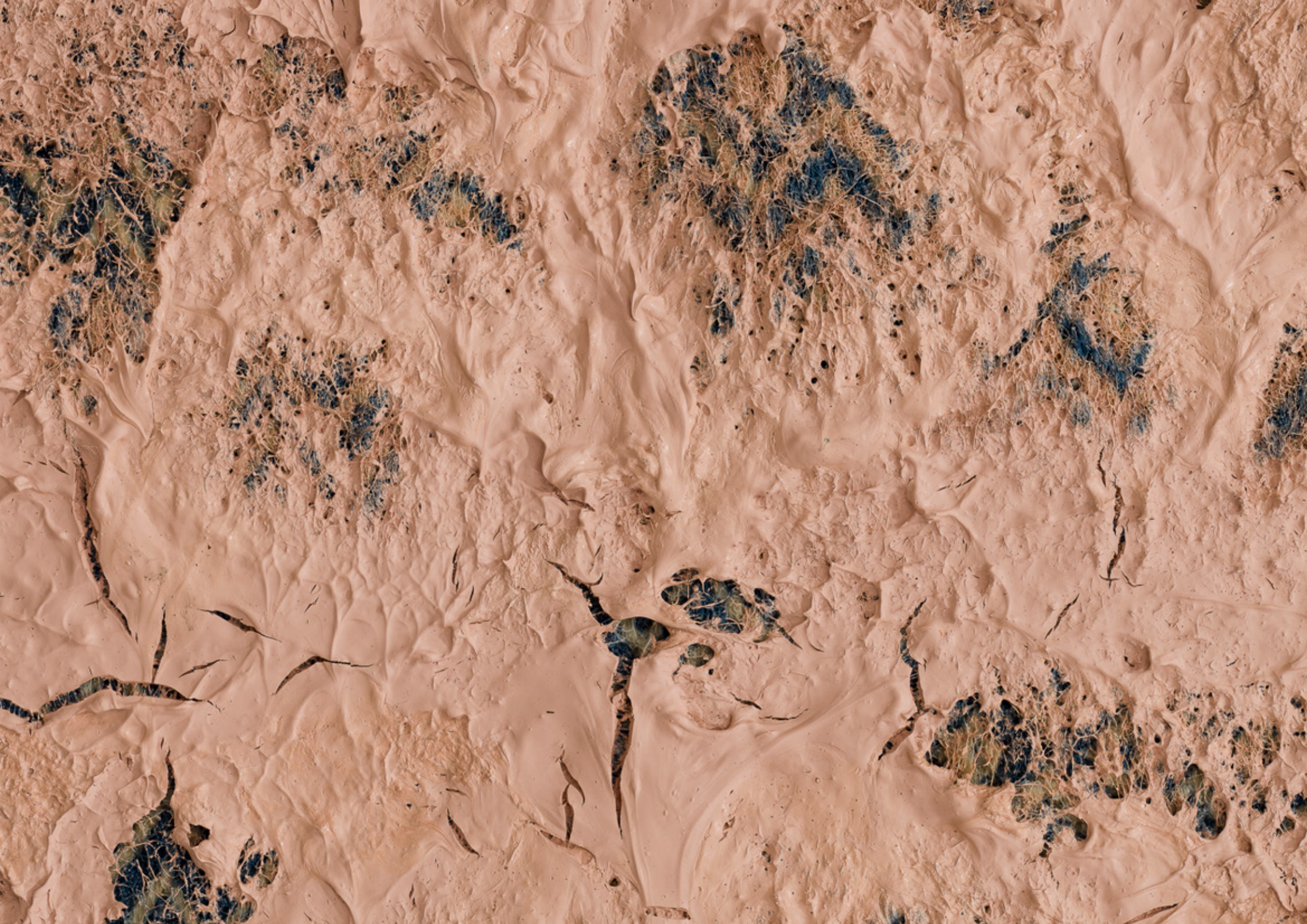
*New maps #4, 2023*  
PVC glue and  
latex paint on carpet  
99,5 x 148 x 2 cm  
39.2 x 58.3 x 0.8 in



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New maps #5, 2023  
PVC glue and  
latex paint on carpet  
152 x 95 x 3 cm  
59.8 x 37.4 x 1.2 in





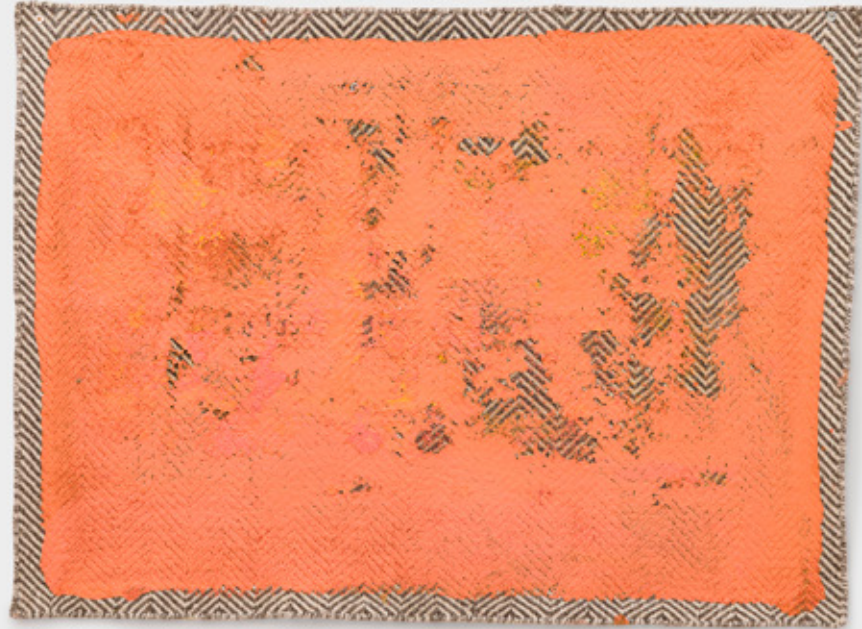


**—**  
New maps #6, 2023  
PVC glue and  
latex paint on carpete  
291 x 203 x 3 cm  
114.6 x 79.9 x 1.2 in





**—**  
New maps #7, 2023  
latex and paint on carpet  
94 x 148 x 1,5 cm  
37 x 58.3 x 0.6 in







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*Punto de fuga # 9, 2024*  
PVA glue and latex paint  
8 x 5 x 2 cm  
3.1 x 2 x 0.8 in





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*Punto de fuga # 10, 2024*  
PVA glue and latex paint  
8 x 5 x 2 cm  
3.1 x 2 x 0.8 in

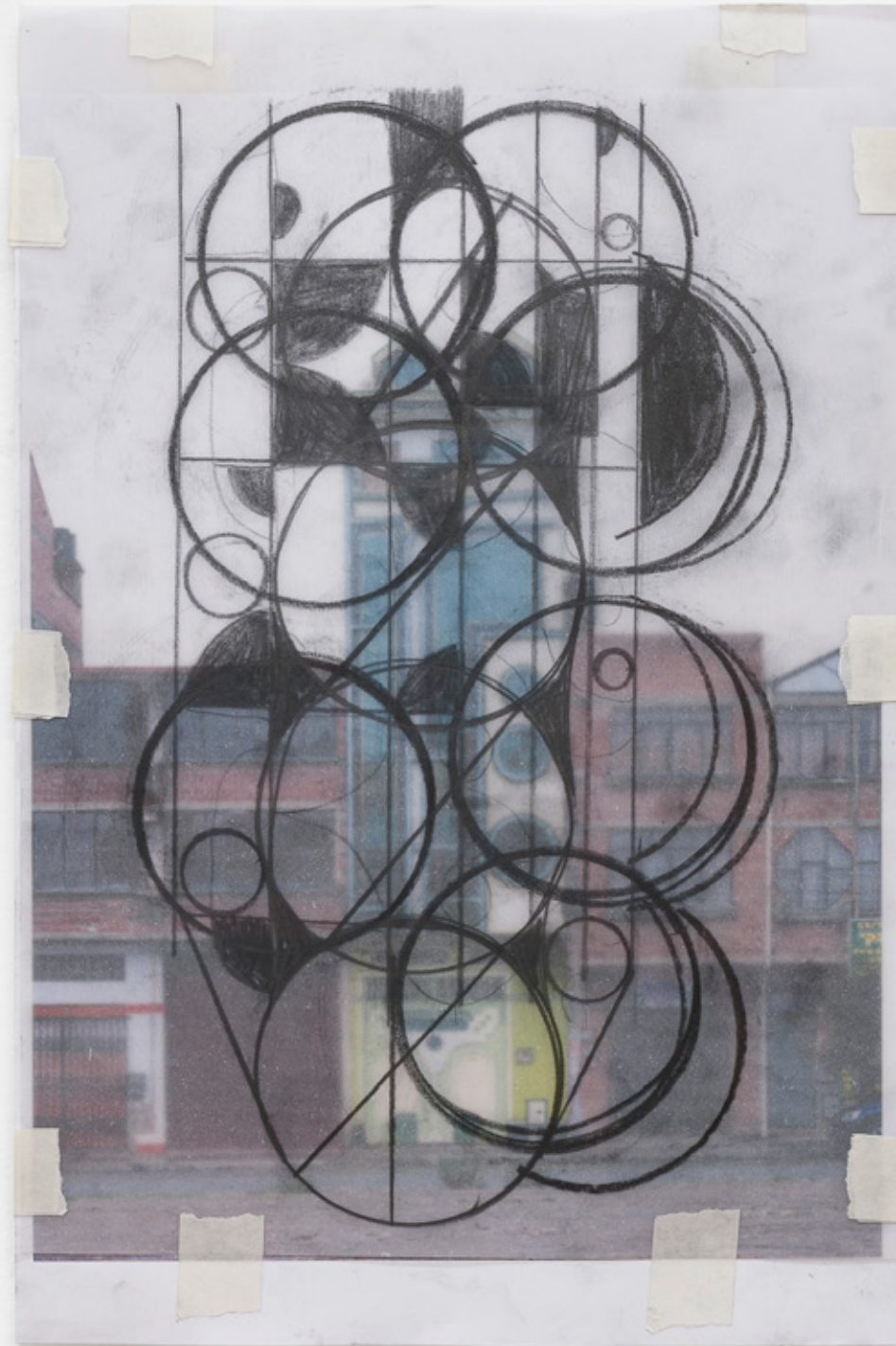






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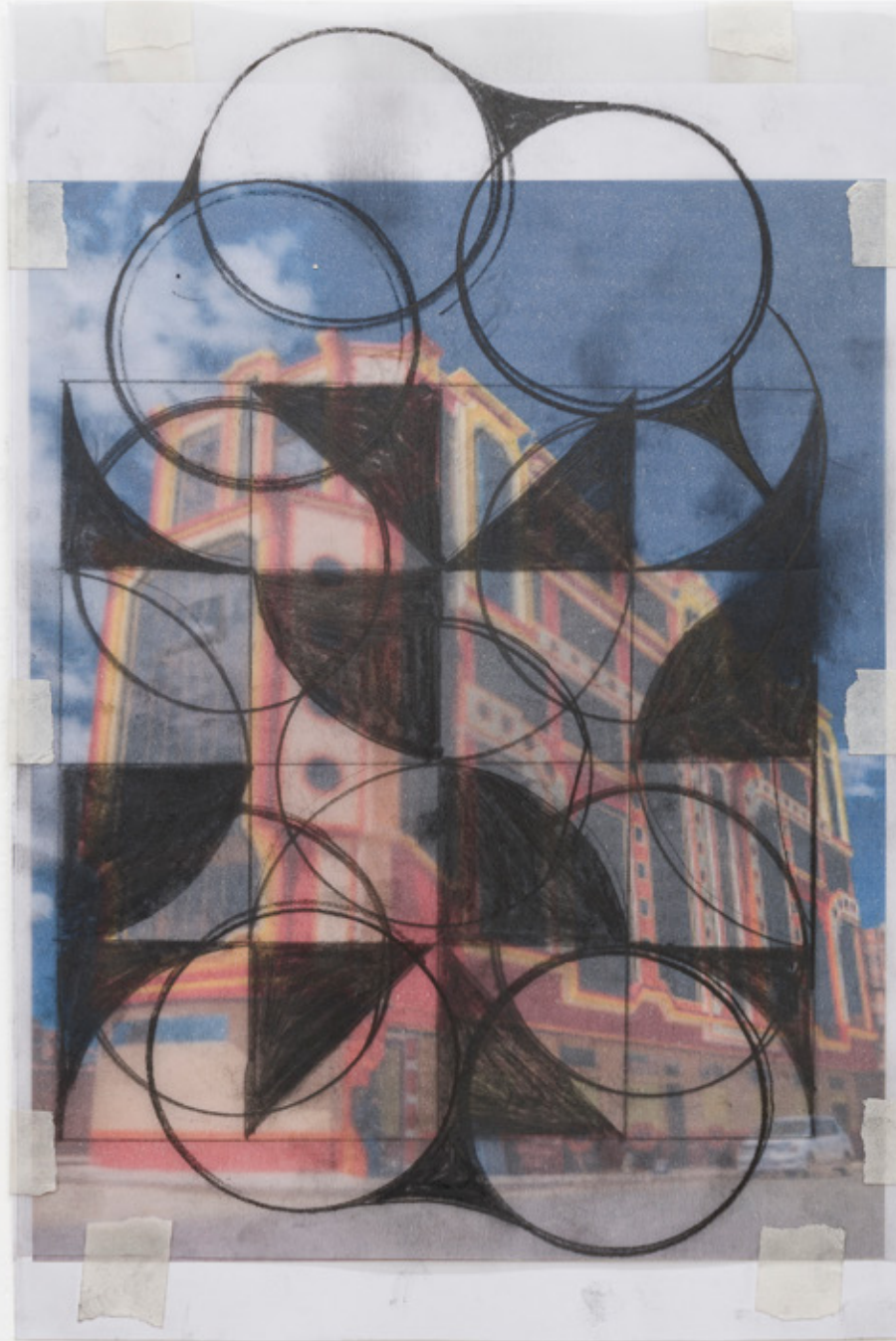
*Informality and unemployment*, 2023  
chromogenic color print  
and tool bag  
30 x 22,5 cm  
11.8 x 8.9 in



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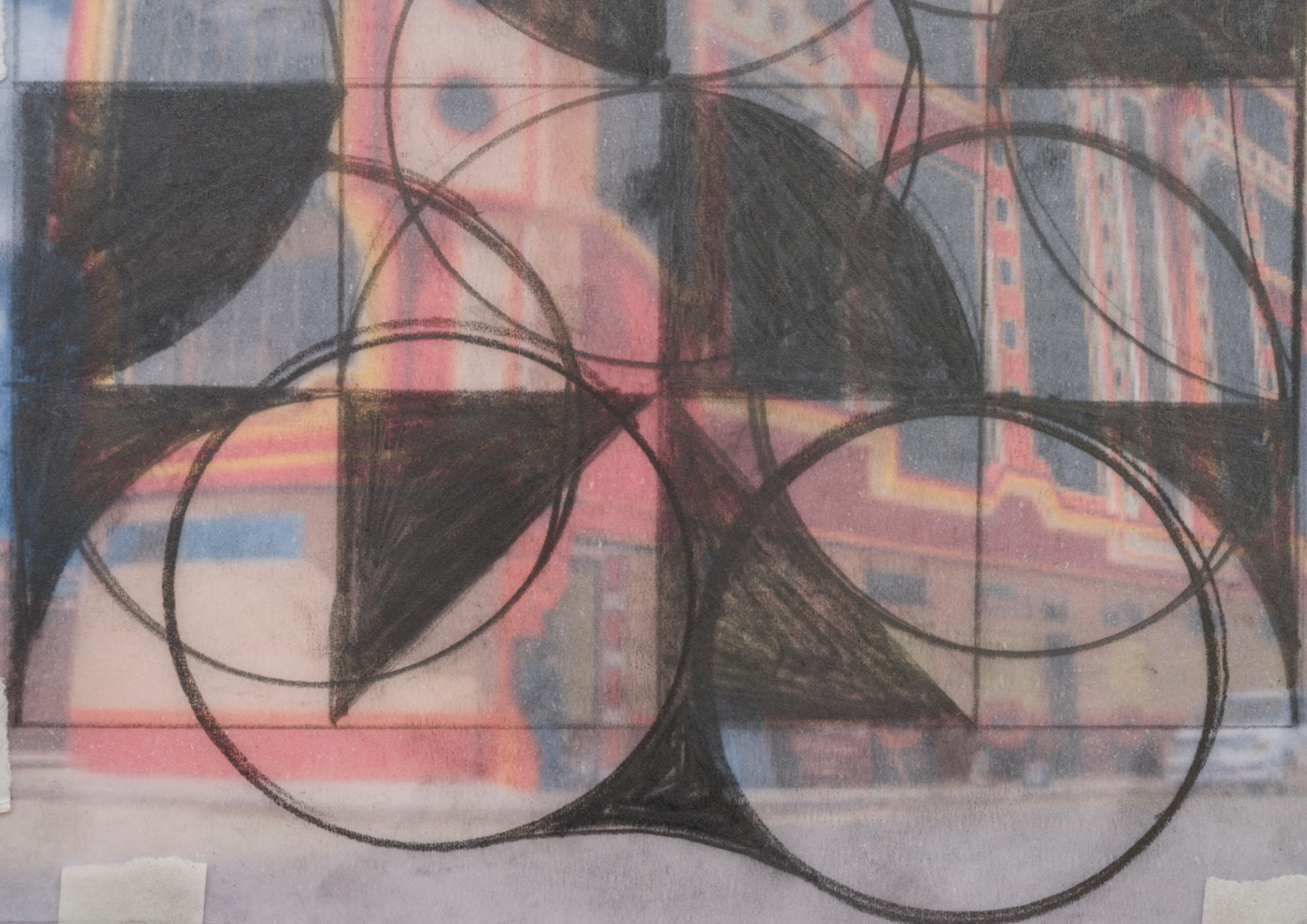
*Mutation, Andean Architecture, 2024*  
pencil on tracing paper,  
tape and C-print  
31,5 x 21 cm  
12.4 x 8.3 in





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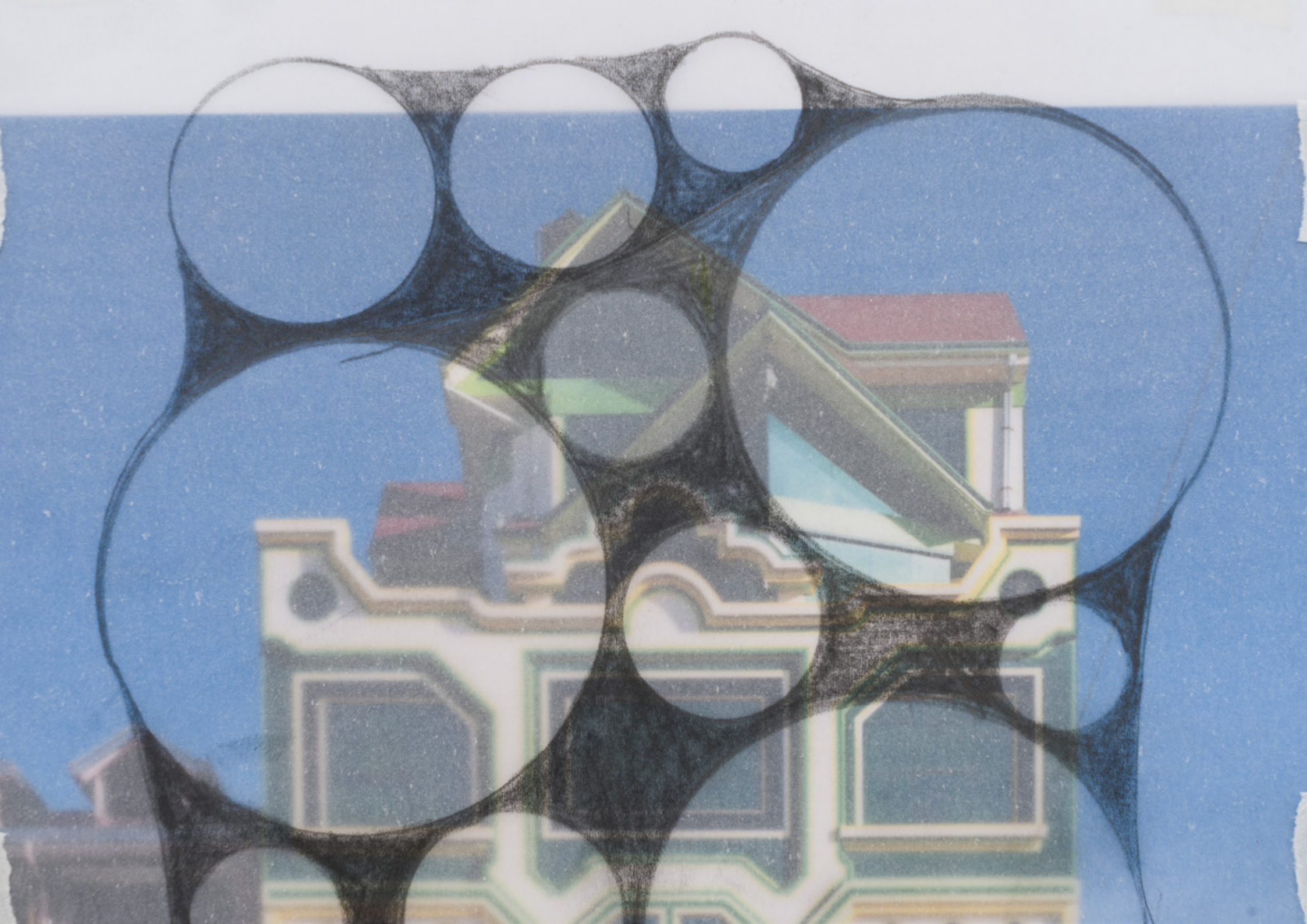
*Mutation, Andean Architecture, 2024*  
pencil on tracing paper, tape and C-print  
31 x 21 cm  
12.2 x 8.3 in





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*Mutation, Andean Architecture, 2024*  
pencil on tracing paper, tape and C-print  
31 x 20,5 cm  
12.2 x 8.1 in



installation view  
*Occupy*, 2024

part of the exhibition  
*Inhabiting Together*  
Galeria Nara Roesler,  
São Paulo, Brazil, 2024  
photo: Flávio Freire







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exhibition view  
*Mind Awake, Body Asleep*, 2022  
Secession, Vienna, Austria, 2021  
photo: Iris Ranzinger



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## carlos bunga

b. 1976, Porto, Portugal

lives and works in Barcelona, Spain

Carlos Bunga creates process-oriented works in various formats: sculptures, paintings, drawings, performances, video, and above all in situ installations, that refer to and intervene in their immediate architectural surroundings.

While often using ordinary, unassuming materials such as packing cardboard and adhesive tape, Bunga's work involves a highly developed degree of aesthetic care and delicacy, as well as a conceptual complexity derived from the inter-relationship between doing and undoing, between unmaking and remaking, between the micro and the macro, between investigation and conclusion. Straddling the divide between sculpture and painting, Bunga's deceptively delicate works are characterized by an intense study of the combination of color and materiality, while at the same time emphasize the performative aspect of the creative act.

Bunga's works on paper, which are closely related to his sculptures and installations, often involve overlays, whether of compositional elements in the paintings or sheets of translucent paper in the drawings. The analytic/descriptive result, like a photographic double-exposure, mimics the dual experience of memory and imagination underlying the sculpture.

[click to see full cv](#)

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### selected solo exhibitions

- *Reassembling Spilt Light: An Immersive Installation*. Sarasota Art Museum, Sarasota, USA (2023)
- *Against the extravagance of desire*, Palácio de Cristal, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain (2022)
- *Something Necessary and Useful*, Whitechapel, London, UK (2020)
- *Carlos Bunga, Architecture of Life*, Museu de Arte, Arquitetura e Tecnologia (MAAT), Lisbon, Portugal (2020)
- *Capella, La Capella dels Àngels*, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), Barcelona, Spain (2015)

### selected group exhibitions

- *Coreografias do impossível*. 35<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Biennial, São Paulo, Brazil (2023)
- *Meia Noite*, Bienal de Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal (2021)
- *Gigantisme*, Pôle d'Art Contemporain de Dunkerque, Dunkerque, France (2019)
- *Quote/Unquote. Entre apropriação e diálogo*, Museu de Arte, Arquitetura e Tecnologia (MAAT), Lisbon, Portugal (2017)
- *The State of the Art of Architecture*, Chicago Architecture Biennial, Chicago, USA (2015)

### selected collections

- Fundação Serralves, Porto, Portugal
- Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, USA
- Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, Portugal
- Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), Barcelona, Spain
- Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit, USA
- Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection, New York, USA
- Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil
- Pérez Art Museum, Miami, USA
- The Museum of Modern Art MoMA, New York, USA

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nara roesler

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