



"Rest and Support", 2024
Installation, various media on paper, two videos of 5 min. each, ceramics, seating
Variable measurements



"A group of modest-sized ceramics evoke fragments of architecture. Their volumes interpenetrate in an unending, formal dialogue, while the paintings on their sides tell of light, colour, and movement. Nicolás Sarmiento's work is rooted in his engagement with the things of everyday life. Neither his paintings nor his sculptures play the usual game of seduction; they are not embarrassed by manners. They are executed in a relationship to space, emptiness and construction that is wobbly and strange. They oscillate between the created and the uncreated. Nicolás Sarmiento is an artist of the ordinary who feeds off all things unspectacular. He finds his motifs on the street, in stairwells, at flea markets, in display windows, on the facades of buildings and in artist's books, in the most singular and trivial of banalities. He then fashions them into tools for conceptual experimentation and constantly evolving explorations of form. Pollinating the exhibition space, the simple seating arrangements that the artist has inserted into the Kunsthalle might easily be mistaken for the gallery's own furniture, were it not for their slightly battered appearance, hinting at a previous life elsewhere. Yet for visitors and museum attendants alike, the seating is a welcome opportunity to rest and relax, while creating a space in which they can fully perceive their environment."

Text by Séverine Fromaigeat

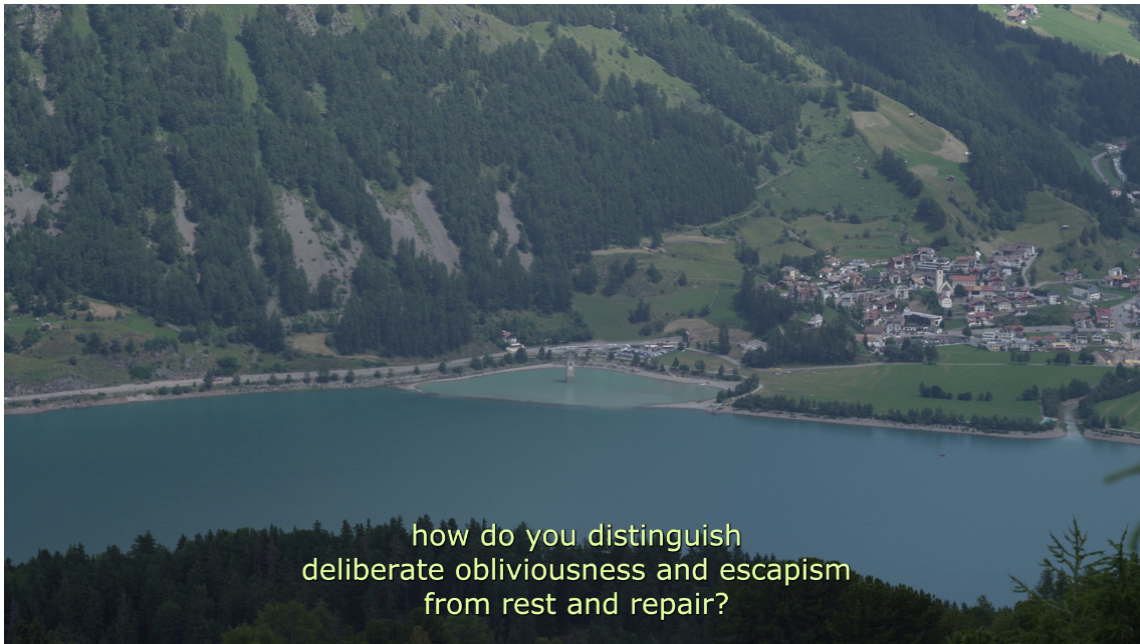
Part of **"Come as You Are"**, a group show curated by Séverine Fromaigeat, at Kunsthalle Basel
The exhibition shows works by the artists who in 2023 were awarded a grant by the Kunstcredit Basel-Stadt

September, 2024





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Link [video I](#) and [video II](#)



"Basic theories of labor economics are based on the simplifying assumption that individuals can divide their daily available 24 hours between work and leisure only. Agents will then choose an allocation of time precisely in such a way that individual utility is maximized with respect to a monetary compensation of their work efforts and the gained gratification of leisure.

(...)

The individual drawings are snapshots, a collection of thoughts and reflections, which the artist usually records on paper in standard sizes. Sarmiento understands this practice as a kind of diary, easily transportable and interchangeable, with limited needs of space and capital, allowing continuity and endurance. Originally conceived outside of a possible exhibition context, repeatedly also functioning as sketches for video works and sculptures, they seem to attain a different legitimacy within a lacquered lime wood frame. Excluded from an output-driven cycle, also the assemblages of found objects find an alternative meaning through their exposure in Atelier Bella's shop-like showcases.

In Sarmiento's production, benefits of work, scarcity of resources, and the measurement of value play a central role. Often bordering on the absurd, conformities are rejected. Playing with the occurrences of the space, the exhibition *Shells of Visibility* brings together drawings and objects from different places and times and inquires about the beginning and end of an artwork. What do we value? What can we see? At what point are our assessments approaching their limits?"

Marius Quiblier

Fragment from the exhibition text from the solo show
"Shells of Visibility" at Bella, Zürich. October 2023





"Shells of Visibility", 2023, installation view.



"Gebühren/Increased Hearing Abilities While Paying Fees", 2018–2023.

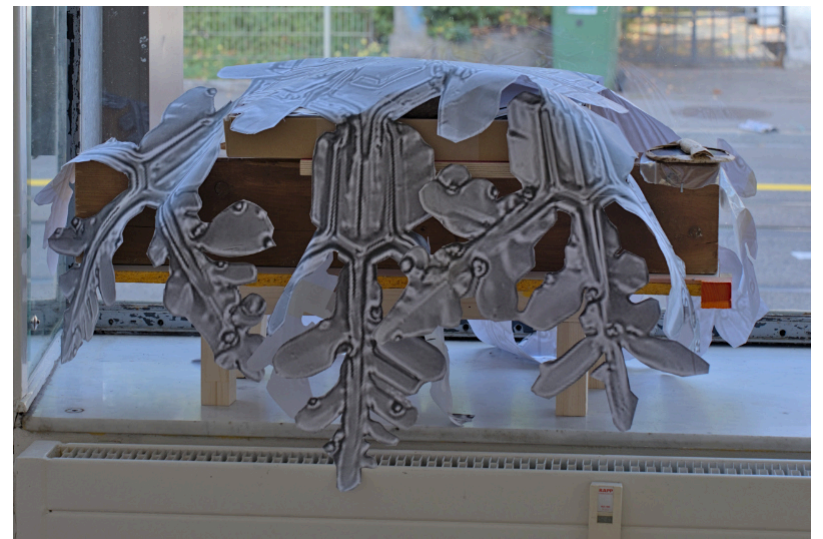
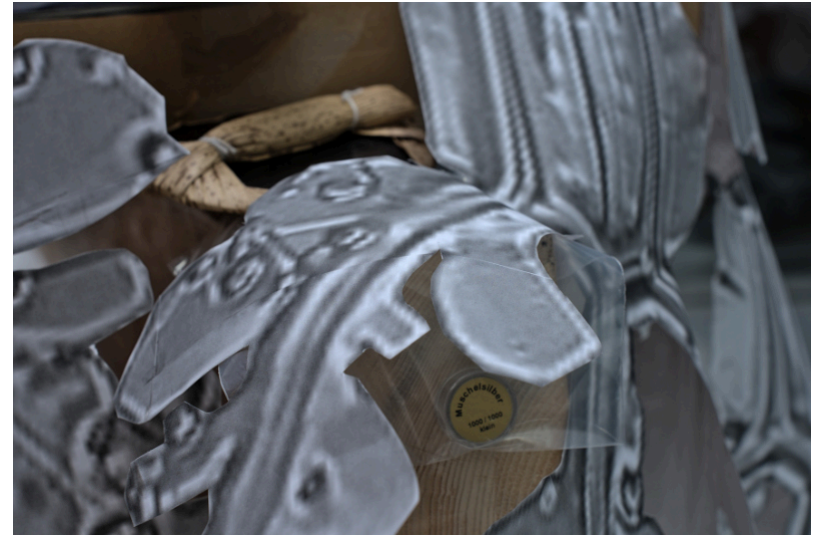
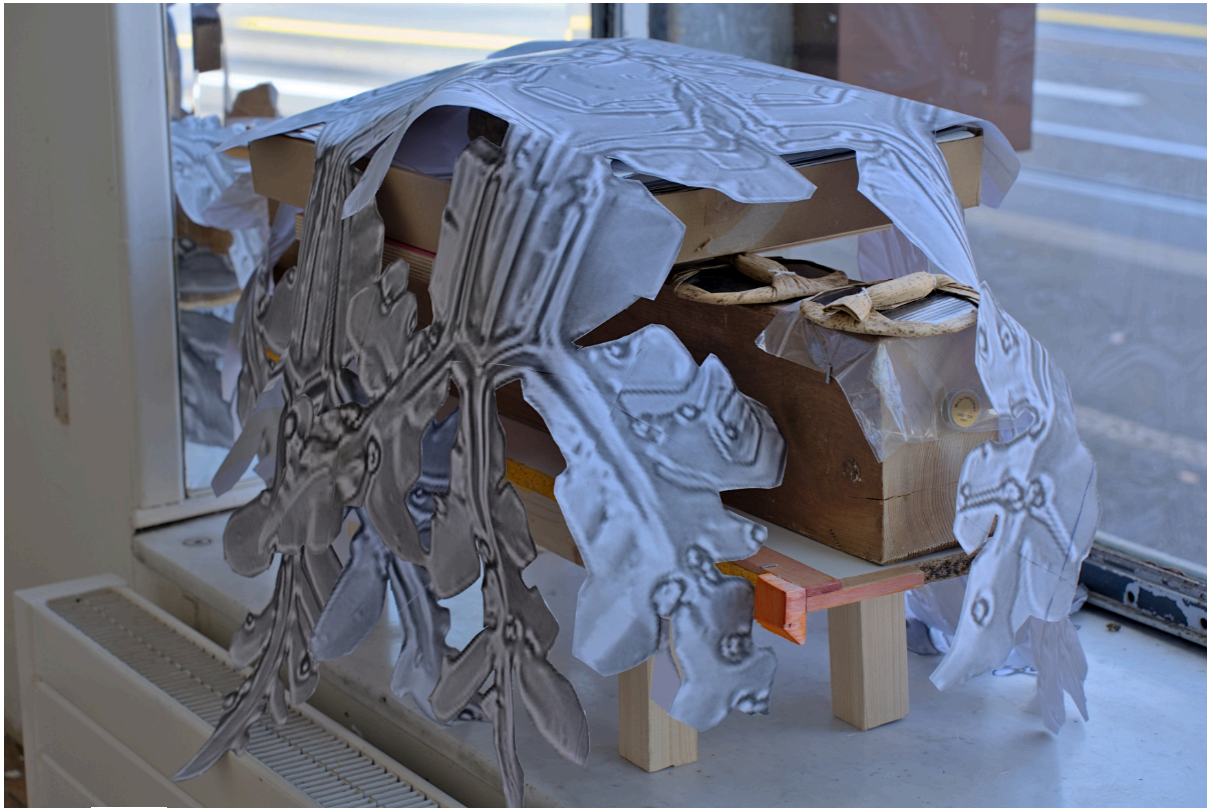
Mixed media on paper, artist's frame

77 x 104 cm



"Spotlight, Side Light, Key Light and Cloud", 2023
Mixed media on paper and cinefoil, artist's frame
84 x 104 cm



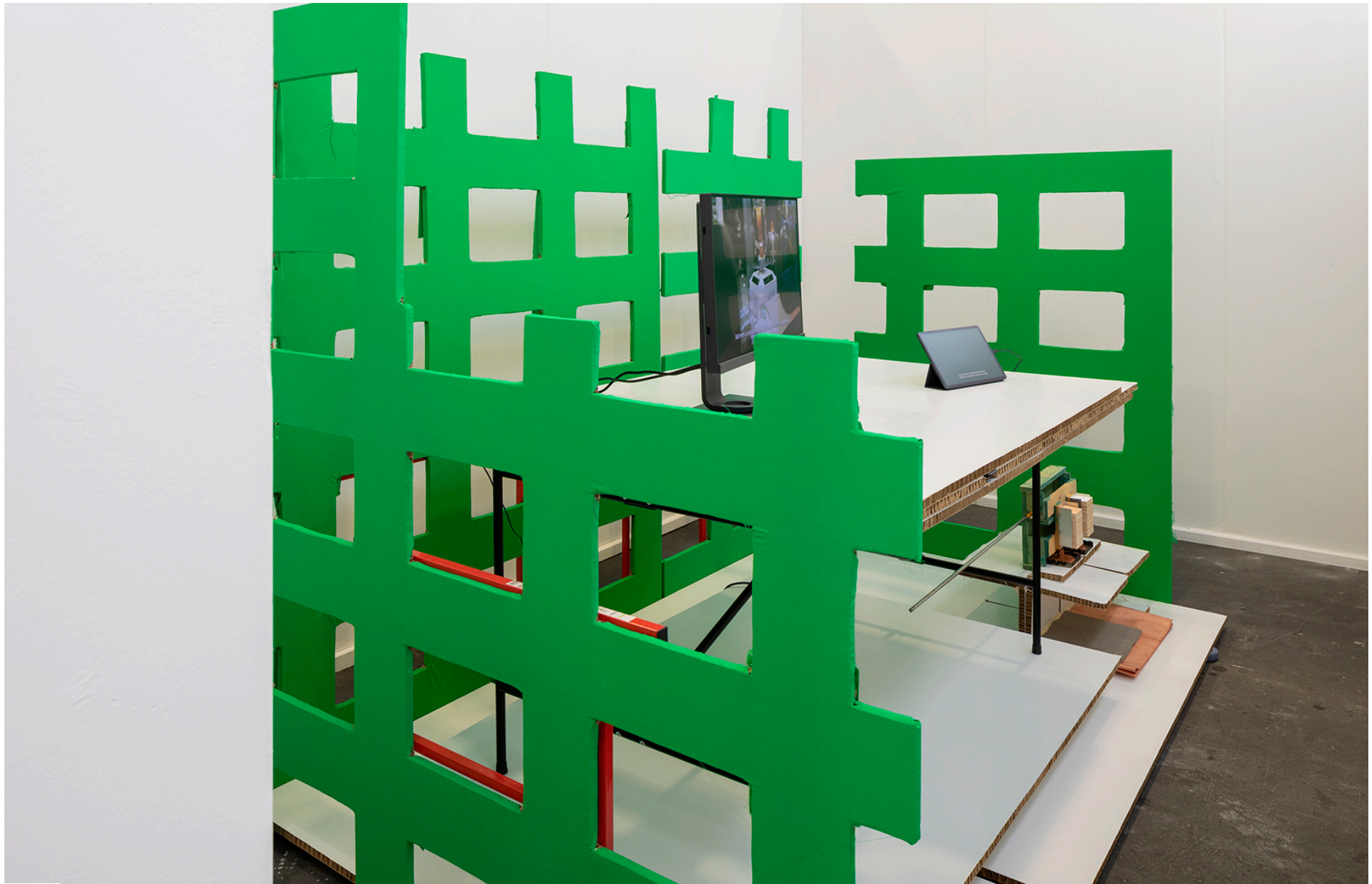


"Snowflake on Exhibitions' Texts", 2023

Inkjet print, wood, stone, frame points, paint, plastic bag, cardboard, highlighter pen, wood stain, unopened shell silver powder and japanese printing tool
100 x 70 x 46 cm



"It Is All Grey Out There: The Floors Are Ash, the Walls Are Dove, the Table Is Slate, the Rug Is Gunmetal", 2022
 (Display for "Career Ladder" from Karola Dischinger, based on a photo documentation from Giuseppe Biasco).
 Wood, UV-Print on Stadurlon, wood stain, wax, velvet and pencil
 215 x 150 x 75 cm



"Live Reduction", 2022

Cardboard honeycomb panels, green chroma fabric, trestles, video «**Floor Mode**» (2022, full HD, color, no sound, 18'00"), monitor 27", media player, video «**_Traffic with reality_Like a 🐼 watching architectural digest II**» (2022, full HD, color, no sound, 51'49"), tablet 11", wood, aluminum, glue, ink, paper, clay, metal tube, Eiermann table und Faraday-fabric
275 x 180 x 170 cm





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propelling towards a meager shift in our ability to navigate, inhabit,
and define the spatial realm.

"Floor Mode", 2022, still frame
Full HD video, color, no sound.
20:53 min



"The sculpture occupies space, displaces space, is itself space, and concentrates space. The piece is a work of art, an exhibition display and an exhibition all rolled into one. As an object, Live Reduction limits our scope for movement and action through its volume and placement at its location; but at the same time it stimulates visual perception and deals with the experience, exploration and appropriation of built space. On one of the two monitors standing next to each other on a raised drafting table, we are guided through a meticulously designed, deserted interior intended for private use; on the other, we are drawn into a landscape of scattered developments in which private and public use collide. The jury was impressed by the precise set-up at the location, the investigation of living space and, in particular, the way in which the work itself makes aspects of research, design and implementation visible."

Text from the jury in the Swiss Art Awards' publication

[Link to the videos.](#)



"Public Possession", 2022
Solo show at Amore, Basel





"_Traffic with Reality_Like A 🍷 Watching Architectural Digest", 2022
HD video, color, no sound
40:04 min



Previous page:

"Double Soul (Industrial Design Confabulations)", 2022

Ink, watercolor, pencil and perforations on paper, plastic sheet, polyurethane, silk, steel, glue, cardboard honeycomb panels, furniture wood samples and standardized object frame
40 x 50 x 10 cm



"Selbständig (Trance)", 2022
Abandoned stone from GGG,
wood, steel, metal clip, wire,
plastic sheet, tickets from 2021
and found object with
embroidery
40 x 36 x 15 cm



"Energy, Accountability and Fantasia: Interior Decoration", 2021

Parasol bases, paper, natural sponges, furniture wood samples, steel, wicker, printed bons valid for one drink, metal clips, found plastic object, leather bag, ceramics, lighter, plastic, cardboard honeycomb panels and coins
120 x 140 x 50 cm



"Energy, Accountability and Fantasia: Interior Decoration", 2021

Parasol bases, paper, natural sponges, furniture wood samples, steel, wicker, printed bons valid for one drink, metal clips, found plastic object, leather bag, ceramics, lighter, plastic, cardboard honeycomb panels and coins
120 x 140 x 50 cm



"Panning Saturated Value", 2022

Acrylic, pen marker, pencil and glue on paper and canvas

156 x 216 cm

With Amore at Basel Social Club '23 in a former mayonnaise factory



"Non Chemical Outpost", 2021
Solo show at Faltpavillon. [47.572002,7.689024](#), Bettingen, Switzerland.



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"Non Chemical Outpost", 2021
Solo show at Faltpavillion. [47.572002,7.689024](https://www.faltpavillion.ch/en/program/2021/non-chemical-outpost), Bettingen, Switzerland.

Things not comparable, or things that does not stitch together, are accused of not having chemistry between them.

With that in mind, I tried to work for this show with a assemblage of objects, images and text in a location that was also serving as another element with its own presence. Faltpavillon is a project developed by Michael Ray Von and Finn Curry. The project is located physically in a pop up 3 x 3 m. tent, transportable and easy to build.

I was invited for the first show and we located in an outlying point in Bettingen, close to the St. Chrischona church, the Swisscom-Fernsehturm and the border with Germany. For the invitation, we used a drawing that I did based on a painting from a Basler artist, Rudolph Maeglin, "Lokal Nr. 13 (Chemiebetrieb)".

In the tent, a reproduction of a painting (actually a 2018 calendar from a printer shop) was installed in a corner. This painting, "Los cuentos del abuelo" ("The grandfather's tales"), was made by an argentinean artist, Luis Molina Campos.

I was intrigued by how the figures were depicted, in both images, out of scale and by the settings where they were portrayed. Two walls of the pavillon were left hanging in the other corner, creating two open sides. Inside, a piece of a root from a tree, coming from a Brocki in Gundeli, allegedly coming from Phillipines, was diagonally placed.

Attached to this root, there was a Jericho rose in a small bowl of water -slowly blooming out from it-, a small rock from the Emma Kunz' grotto surrounding area and a small shiny rock given by a paranoiac guy in Mexico.

A QR code on one of the walls with windows, with a picture of a roof from St. Chrischona, linking you to a text that I wrote/compiled for the show. This explained a bit the background of the argentinean painter and from where is coming his for export way of portraying the countryside life in the first half of the 20th century in Argentina

A second QR code, with a picture of the root in the Brocki, was located in the gates of a tunnel-deposit 20 minutes away, as an extension of the show. This links you to an audio of a reading of a second text, covering some data about the area of the church, some myths around its settlement, and some info about the root and its aesthetic characteristics.

This project was not planned to achieve a completeness coverage of its themes, instead, I wanted to work allowing to test various levels of imperfectability, dislocation and the problematics of fiction and history as discursive axes.

The documentation of the show is trying as well to capture the atmosphere of the date, the installation and the landscape, difusing the limits between the two.

[Link to the QR Code Audios](#)

"Non Chemical Outpost", 2021

Solo show at Faltpavillon. [47.572002,7.689024](#), Bettingen, Switzerland.





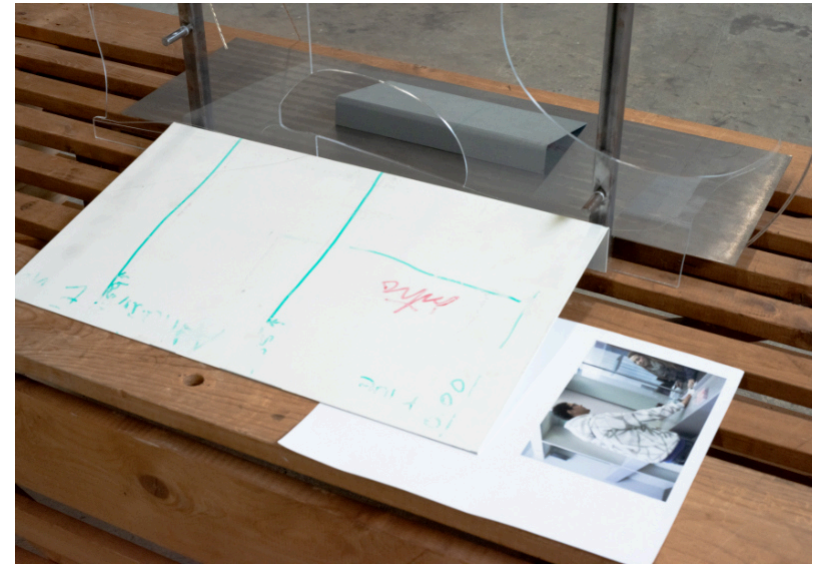
"Migration, Power and Pristine Reservoir Counters", 2020
Wood, metal, glass, ticket, laser cut on acrylic sheet, wire, inkjet print on paper,
plastic thread, electronic scale, stainless steel, plastic, ball bearings and orange peels
Variable dimensions



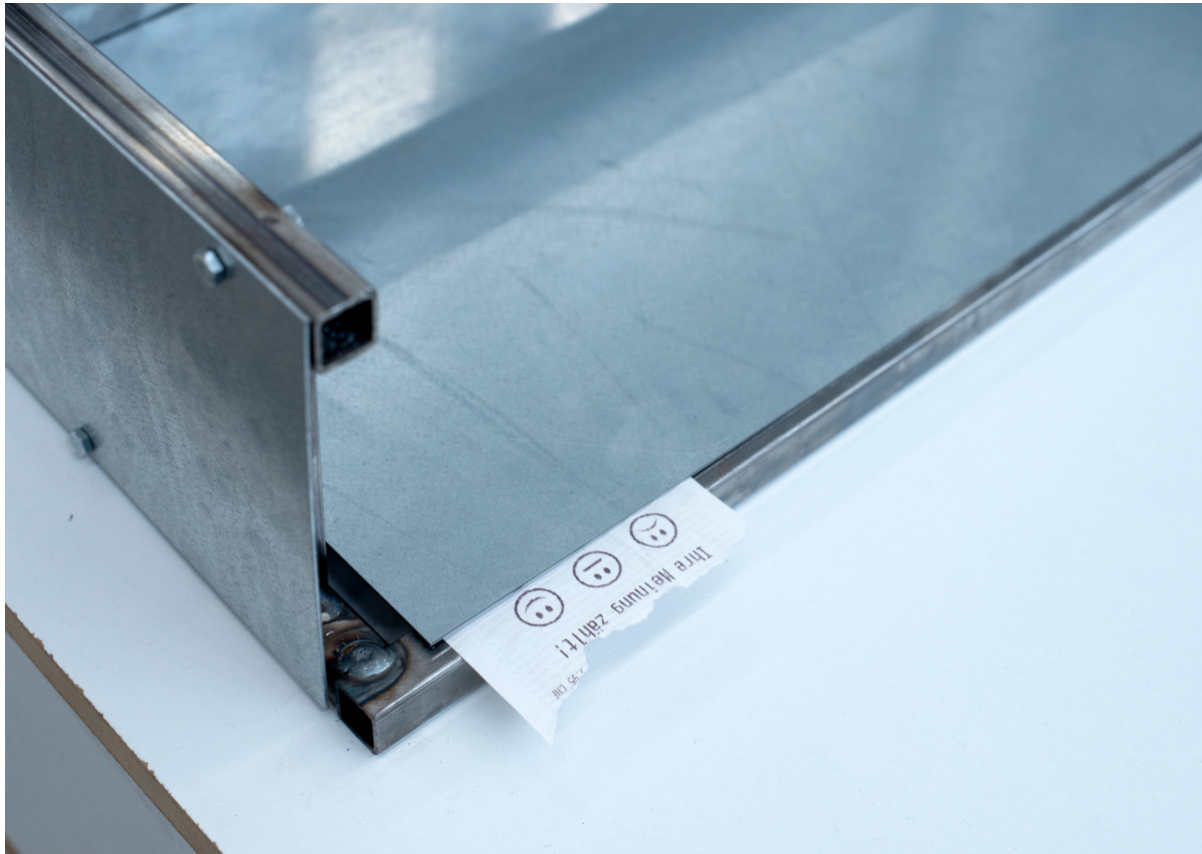
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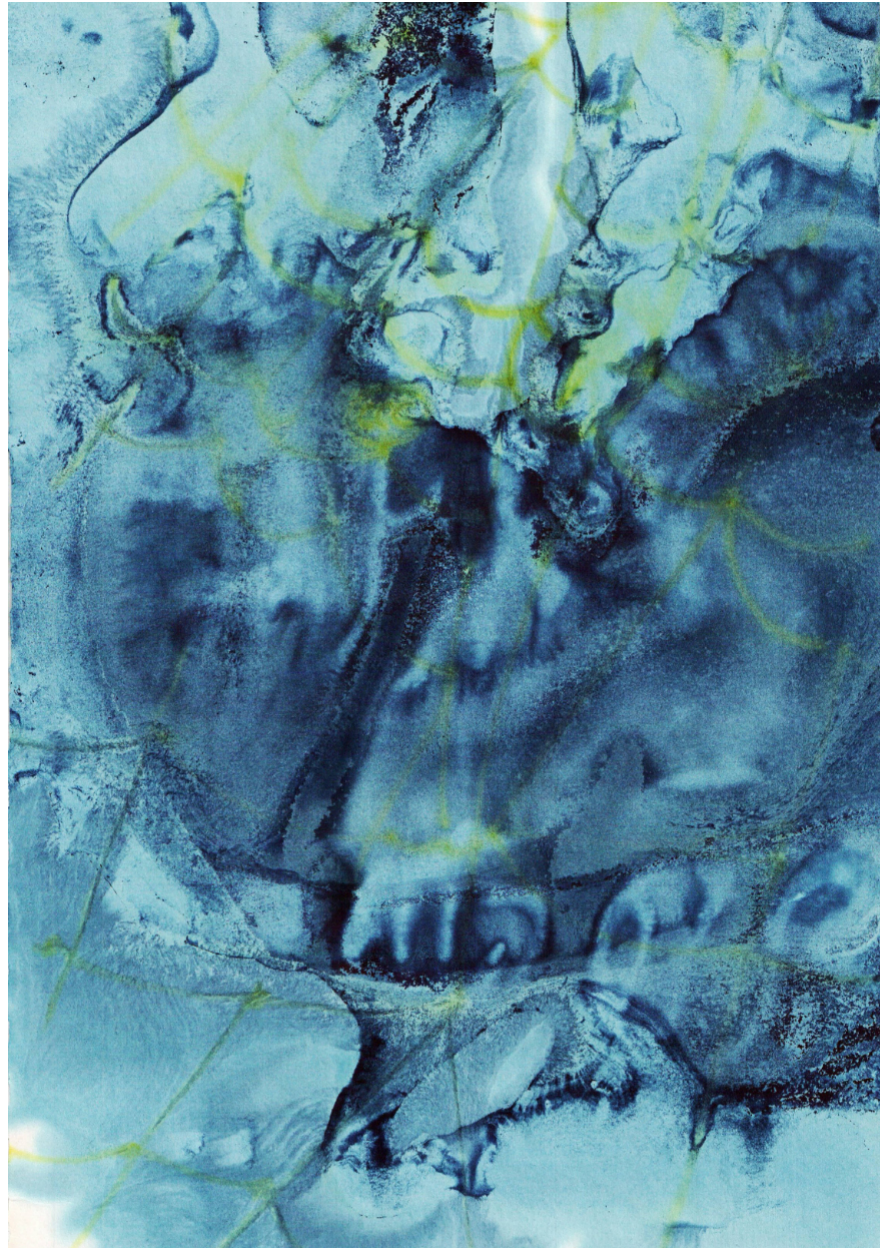
"Migration, Power and Pristine Reservoir Counters", 2020

Wood, metal, glass, ticket, laser cut on acrylic sheet, wire, inkjet print on paper, plastic thread, electronic scale, stainless steel, plastic, ball bearings and orange peels
Variable dimensions

"Nicolás Sarmiento's new sculptures have been originated from the need of redefining the architecture that defines human interaction in our public spaces during the pandemic. His practice — earlier through drawings and installations— was always attentive to issues of social space. Art contributes to the solidification of the spaces occupied by working people and is capable to bring their lives into focus in a context so different than an exhibition space. Nicolás seems attracted to the appearance of new forms because they are rather ugly and invisible or unimportant for architecture or art. Because they have no historical importance and in giving a voice to their insignificant he discovered a whole new formal and social language."
Chus Martinez



"Saga candado", 2015, installation view
Solo show at Movil, Buenos Aires, Argentina.



"Saga candado", 2015
Solo show at Movil, Buenos Aires, Argentina.



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"Saga candado", 2015, installation view
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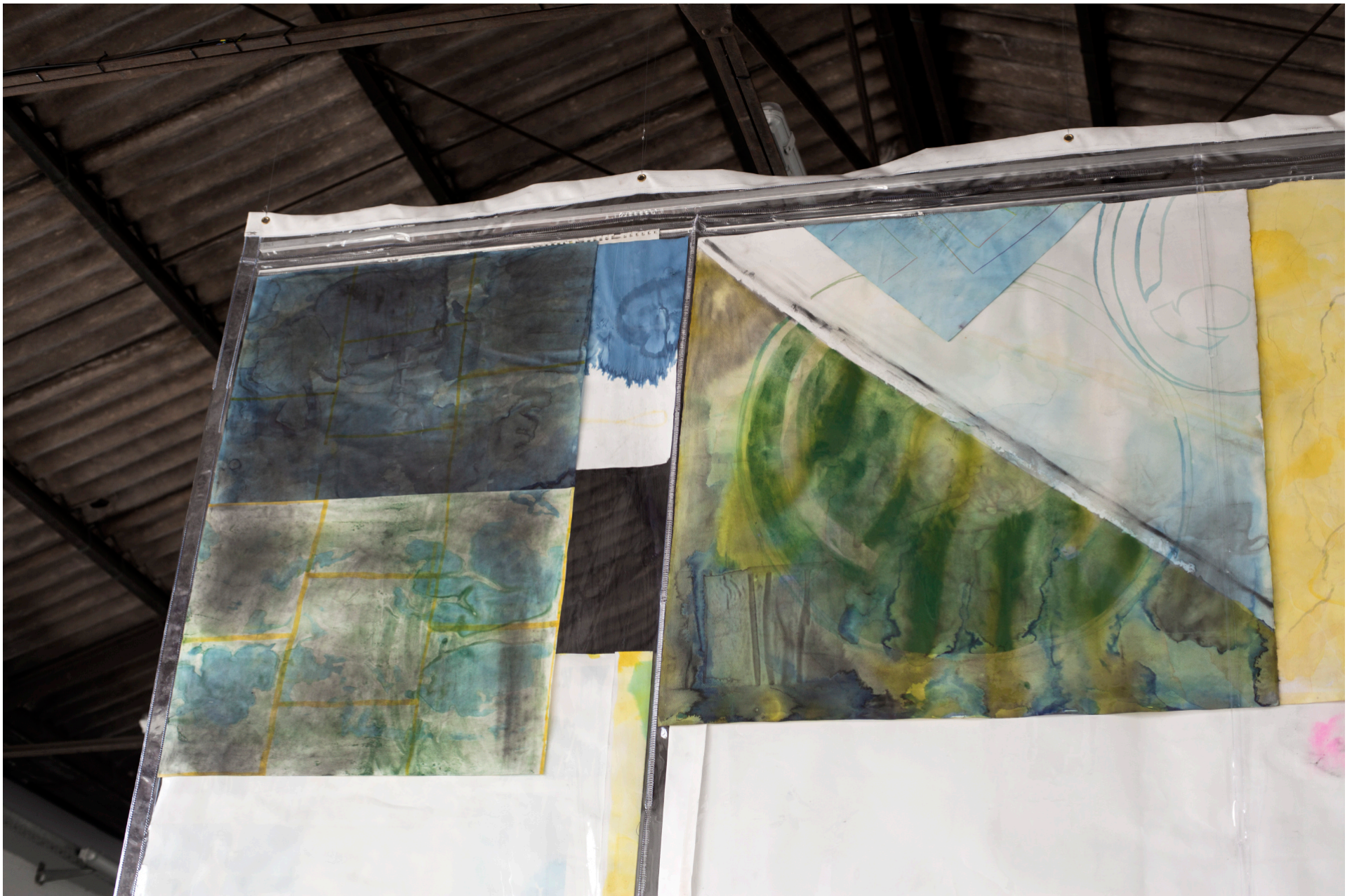
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"Saga candado", 2015, installation view
Solo show at Movil, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

"Saga candado", press article by Claudio Iglesias in Radar, in the Pagina 12 newspaper:

"Everything stays on the paper"

The new exhibition by Nicolás Sarmiento, *Saga candado*, is a monologue of enormous dripping pages, colored for no apparent reason. Loose pages of an abandoned atlas, praise of "zoning out"; Sarmiento was, a few years ago, one of the managers of Rayo Lazer, a space for exhibitions and parties set up in a ruined and big house on Avenida Lacroze that was an intense school of public relations and organization of shows.

Green is blue and yellow: a cheap blue from a ballpoint-pen or industrial pigment, an aniline yellow. A dirty green is what results. The "zoning out" with the pen, the dirt of the workshop, a cup that overturns, a footstep: everything remains on paper. Nicolás Sarmiento (Necochea, 1986) had warned that he could turn his little misery as a draftsman into a parade of paper flags with his first individual exhibition in Buenos Aires, in 2012. Later he returned to silence and poorly paid work as a technician and artist's assistant. In his new show, *Saga candado*, he returns to his monologue with large, dripping pages. This time the papers alternate hanging in canvas envelopes the size of a cyclops that has to send transparent letters, illiterate letters that have no addressee or order, but that convey the silly happiness of a misused painkiller. The drawings seem to want nothing, they invade the space in spite of themselves. They are disintegrative fictions, loose pages from an abandoned atlas, wet and broken into pieces on a wide avenue in the suburbs of the city.

The size of Sarmiento's ambition has nothing to do with that of the papers: his seem like invisible ambitions. The scale of the images, on the other hand, seems to generate anesthesia or calm. This painting with a deficit in social skills, that stammers and drools, a painting submerged in delay, it blocks it, the attention that disperses, starting on one side of the page and continuing anywhere else, leave a circle in the middle of its conclusion, stay with a stupor while watching how a wet piece of paper adhered to another slowly transmitting its pigment, are some of the forms that have a particular history in Buenos Aires.

It was Nicanor Aráoz who discovered them, around 2010: some youngsters who wandered through the exhibitions and made bizarre sculptures and drawings. They made a base in a ruined house on Avenida Lacroze that became a site for exhibitions and parties in an "aguantadero" format: it was called Rayo

Lazer. The motto of the place was: "you can stay to sleep". In addition to overnight stays, occasionally there were talks, asados, and futbol matches. But the space did not leave behind its founding premise and one of those who stayed the night more and more often was a very young Nicolás Sarmiento who came every day from Marcos Paz. Over time, the place came under the direction of a triumvirate: Sarmiento, Lucio Romano, and Mario Scorzelli painted in their respective workshops, planned parties, and did the shopping together. For a while, Rayo Lazer became a jet setter for the poor: the motto of the house was added to the condiments of a shabby cultural center, with screwed-up walls and many beer bottles on the floor. Although everything was done with a certain disorder and finally each one went their way. The project did not last more than a few years, but it was an intense school of public relations and set up of exhibitions: many artists such as Franco Vico, Gala Berger, Tomás Maglione (who had his first solo show in the house) and Ailín Grad passed through there, then a member of the Mainumby music label.

Sarmiento at the same time presented his big papers in a solo show at the Peña gallery in 2012. His name was Alexis Brisa. Valentina Liernur summoned him the following year for an exhibition with Karl Holmqvist: a very famous international artist and already mature, a kind of Swedish godfather of the artist from San Isidro. Reluctant to give an individual show to her idol (invited by the Torcuato Di Tella University by her idea), Liernur gave Holmqvist three minions: one of them was Pablo Accinelli, another was Victor Grippo. The third, Sarmiento.

Saga Candado continues with the theme of large papers, colored with no apparent project, with marker blows and various accidents (dropped tea, more beer, shoe prints) and adds the plastic envelope and the remora of an obsolete industrialism. The recluse adolescent, the hikikomori, in Sarmiento is reunited with the figure of the procrastinator from Buenos Aires. His works have the negligence of someone who leaves some engine parts or fiberglass boards lying around in the backyard, so as not to face the effort of putting them in order. His thing is to continue daydreaming, enhance its record, turn it into a logbook of climatic calamities like the recent disaster in Minas Gerais, the stain of toxic mud that could come from a giant pen that stays still on a blotting paper. In some of Sarmiento's images, nature can be glimpsed as a substrate of toxins and heavy metals, a green whose green is covered by the sulfurous nuances of the catastrophe. The image of the drug, something that clouds and colors the mind, is equated with that of the industry, something that ruins nature, confuses it in tones ranging from yellow to violet. Sarmiento's pigments generate some of these visions: giant clay pens, landscapes surrendered before the spill of an innocent and brutal poison."



"Tubo semiluminoso 1-5 (Semi-Bright Tube 1-5)", 2014. Group show at Ruth Benzacar Gallery
Mixed technique on paper, polycarbonate sheet, cable, rope, printed calendar from a shop, neodymium magnets
120 cm high, variable diameter



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"Alexis Brisa", 2012, installation view
Solo show at Peña Gallery, Buenos Aires



"Alexis Brisa", 2012, installation view
Solo show at Peña Gallery, Buenos Aires



"Alexis Brisa", 2012
Solo show at Peña Gallery, Buenos Aires





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