

measure | decipher

Pratap Morey

INTRODUCTION

TARQ is delighted to present Pratap Morey's first solo exhibition – 'measure | decipher.' Comprising several new works, 'measure | decipher' seeks to examine the artist's preoccupation with changing geographies of urban spaces. Pratap has lived and worked in Mumbai for the most part of his life, and has been constantly displaced by the city's shifting façade. He seeks inspiration from his immediate surroundings, exploring the spatial existence of its residents and the dualism of a colossal urban sprawl where vacant spaces are rapidly transformed into formidable structures.

The artist uses a combination of digital photographic images, archival prints, architectural drawings and engravings in his intricate paper works. Each work delves into the overarching themes of construction, redevelopment and displacement — which are immediate concerns in a contemporary urban environment. The radical proliferation of urban spaces is an urgency that Pratap's practice abstracts and presents to the viewer in his version of relief sculpture. The structural elevations in his works are restrained deliberations to amplify and reveal movement and metamorphosis as well as create the illusion of voids. He uses the structural nature of his works as a tool to create space, utilizing formal structures like corners and the three-point perspective to draw the viewer into each one of his works.

Hena Kapadia,
Gallery Director, TARQ

TARQ

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Deciphering: The sense of distance we adopt towards our everyday living.

The urban is evidently present in the work of Pratap Morey; but also in a certain way his works try to escape the urban, and literally produce fantasy landscapes where the urban is mere picture-play or it is the miniaturised detail making the urban landscape into a fantasy object. His urban landscapes seem to disappear as if after a catastrophic calamity, a devastating flood or earthquake maybe - where all civilisation has disappeared, submerged underneath the firm ground that only a while ago rocked feverishly - what remains are but a few fine traces or urban visions - and in fact the ground cleaned-up of urbanity has now displayed a sense of fine crafted geometry, as if it craved for that ordered drawing on its ownself.

Morey's landscapes on another level are like the child's playground - planned and ordered, cut into shapes and sizes, with a few images from the 'real' world added in to excite the child's play. A playground or a game board - these landscapes appear not permanent but only temporarily frozen, only to metamorphose into some other landscape diagram soon. Morey has cut up the urban landscape into fine pieces of geometry shaping a Rubik's landscape of sorts, that through some divine trigger will metamorphose into a new arrangement of cuts and pieces every destined moment.

Ephemeral, magical, at times out of a science fiction spatial arrangement these landscapes work between the impressions of the schematic and the details of the personal-picture. The urban exists within monumental imaginations drawn out as diagrams on paper as well as the earth - the planner's tools can draw perfect straight lines and meticulous curves on paper as well as the surface of the earth. But the urban is also fleshed out in its everyday images of streets and buildings, roofs and balconies - where Sintex tanks and Dish TV antennae punctuate a grey-blue sky outlined by concrete blocks of

apartments where people are trying to dry clothes and make a living, while newer and higher apartment blocks are being built everyday, covered with blue tarpaulin sheets during construction, and often after that too. Where does the geometry of spatial landscapes, chalked out in our, or a planner's, or a politician's, or Vishnu's dream meet the stuff of everyday life? The root of the word 'to measure' is the same as the root of the word 'to dream' - maya - 'ma' in Sanskrit. The stuff of everyday life - Sintex tanks, and Mild Steel grilles, tarpaulin water-shades over balconies - is indeed the everyday 'art of living' - and that is what Vishnu's dream is made up of - the living of everyday life. Vishnu draws out the terrain of life in his dream, detail by detail, material by material, one object after another, one life along with another, a near doll-world with everything in it - it opens, and unfolds like the Kaavad house-landscape. Then what magical hand draws out the fine measured diagram-landscape, the Kaleidoscope-field, the Rubik's-terrain - into a set of measured pictures, measured picture-worlds?

Morey's landscapes work with the picture as well as the drawing - the pictures are themselves landscapes at different scales, while the drawings are measured networks of lines and diagrams. The architect's system of drawing landscapes in perspectival construction as well as orthogonal projection is a canonised system through which the built landscape gets built, produced, and sold all the time. It is the system of projection and representation through which the existing world, as well as imaginary projections into the future are drawn out; it in fact is often more the reality than a representation of some matter and presence. The language of technical drawings - measuring and representing the world of 'real-stuff' is a process of deciphering the hidden codes behind the stuff of real worlds; every line produces a meaning of the landscape it draws, and draws out. From the modus of technical language that conveys a direct set of informations, notes, and notifications, drawings also at times transform to realms of reality - the drawing itself produces a reality or reveals the hidden sides of some.

As much as pictures document, and even bring to life a certain sense of the 'seen' world, drawings draw upon an understanding of how we

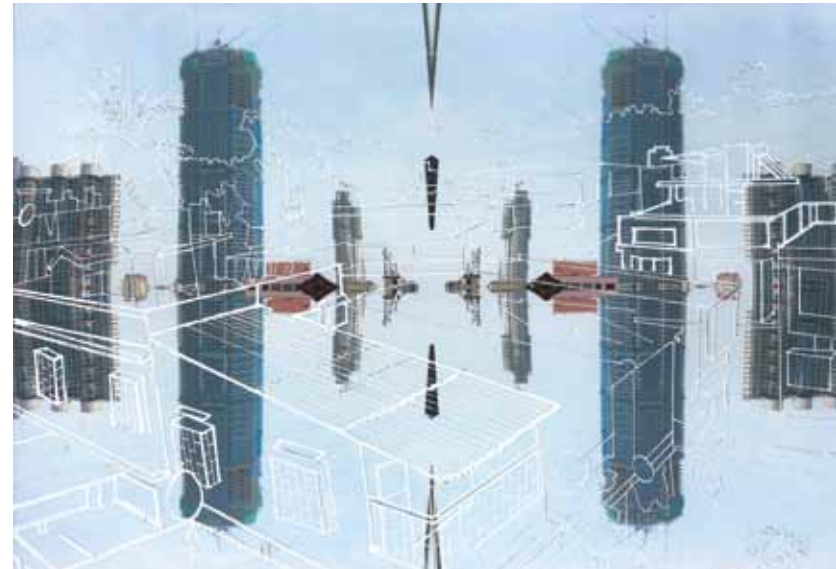
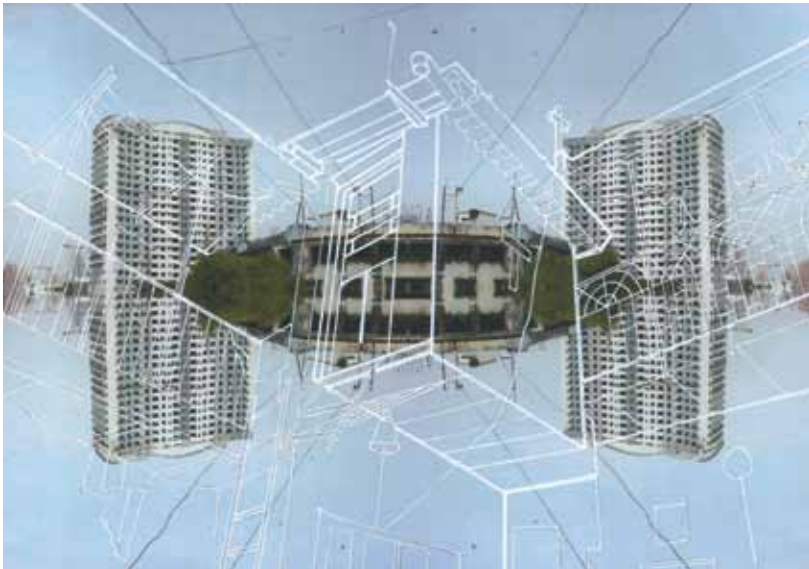
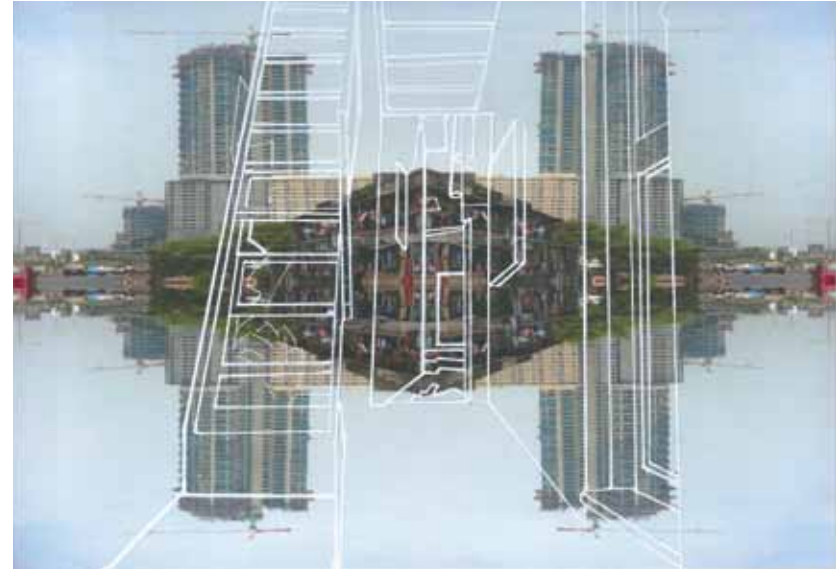
see - the sensibility to breakdown every image into its elements and parts, to decide on their nearness or disappearing distance, to cull out an essential form and hence its basic entity, to regroup elements and objects into a cluster or landscape, arranged to make a picture, and tell a story. The actions of deconstructing and reconstructing-redrawing is an intellectual activity as much as it is a mechanical process; the actions of drawing - the life of that process - can, if encouraged and allowed, dwell on the sensibility and reality of objects and terrains that are being drawn. That dwelling on the sensibility and reality of objects and terrains being drawn - allows for a realisation, an awareness, of the objects 'seen' and lived along with - in ways that may rewrite the sensibilities and perceptions with which we began the journey of 'seeing' and 'drawing'. As pictures are mirrored/reflection-ed, cut up into details or miniatures, and arranged within a geometricised landscape, they regroup into a dream sequence of reality; the drawing of perspectival or orthographic material-topography over it begins to generate a dream-meaning sequence, a set of scenarios that jostle within the simultaneity of dream-production and meaning-making.

As much as the drawings consider the stuff of reality as their basis, and are then actually superimposed over pictures and photos of that reality, they seem to in fact produce a world that primarily exists within the drawn projection - the drawing is the reality while the photos underneath, morphed and mirrored, create some sense of an intoxicated reality no longer real. The reality of photos, and the material recognition of that landscape, and all in life that goes along with it produces a certain surreal 'lost-landscape of reality' - a reality so real that one finds it intoxicating, an almost a new parallel to reality but not real. The reality that is more recognisable now actually comes up and exists in the drawings - the fields of lines and forms, abstracted to their minimum representation, their materiality only expressed through clustering of lines. This reversal of representation and reality produces a measure of the urban that is palpable but not always evident - the roles of reality and representation - not as concepts, but as material worlds. The existing material world of grille-boxed windows, corrugated ground-planes, plastic-clad walls, water pipelines, and all is real. But at the rate this reality is produced - under conditions of

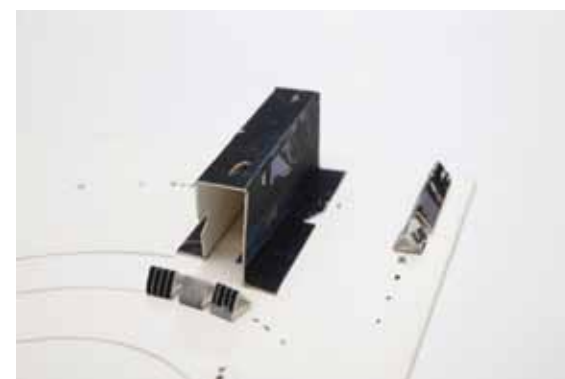
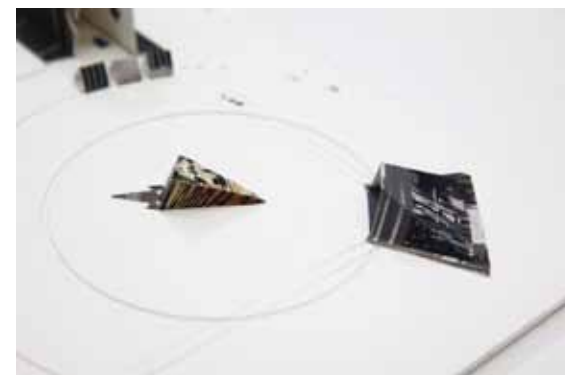
pressure and skewed politics - its emphatic and obsessive-presence (which is then pictured, seen, photographed, lived) makes this existence surreal (and so is its representation) - especially when it is the everyday life of millions of humans. In what ways does this surreal materiality exist alongside the diagrammatic imagination of cities drawn and chalked in clear shapes and forms, with ideal dreamworlds as projections towards a future that is soaring towards cleaner skies, rushing away from the muddy and muddled ground, and closer to the stars above than the clutter of Sintex tanks and dish TV antennae? The absurdity of the gap between the real and the projected is played out as drawings sit on photographs, measuring and deciphering a reality that is everyday and there, yet not acknowledged, recognisable but never accounted, never drawn out as a documentation of the life and cities we occupy - making reality - unreal. As the real and unreal, material and surreal, shape our spaces of existence and living, the non-architectural architecture that shapes the city emerges in the concreteness of architectural drawings.

The sense of distance we adopt towards our everyday living, finding refuge in landscapes of dream-trajectories, produces cities that exist (only) in the realms of near-fictional domains and topographies, while the everyday material world, with its material-reality gets relegated to a topography of denial, the urgent wish to de-recognise it out of some sense of shame or refutation. This space we exist (and live) in between insistent occupation of a projected fantasy and the hurried denial of the everyday reality produces citizens that have lost a sense of measure - the measure of what it means to participate in human worlds, life and death, reflections and arguments, files and books, sleepwalking and reading - we start living in delirious worlds! Morey's landscapes are an attempt to decipher these delirious worlds and cities we are all living in.

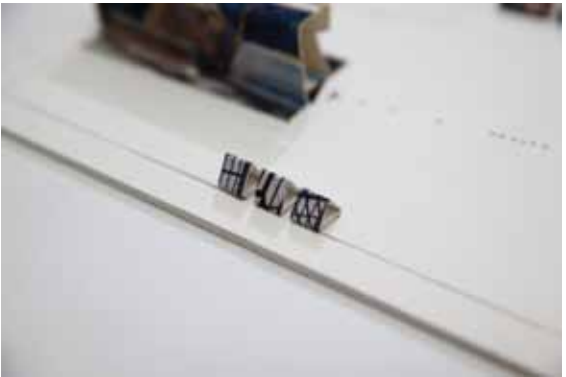
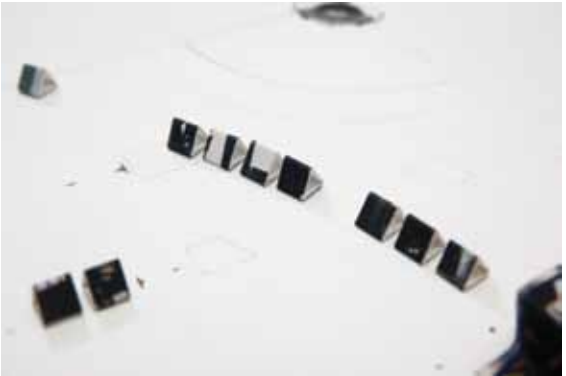
Superimpose I
Watercolour and digital
print on paper
6 x 8.5 inches
2015



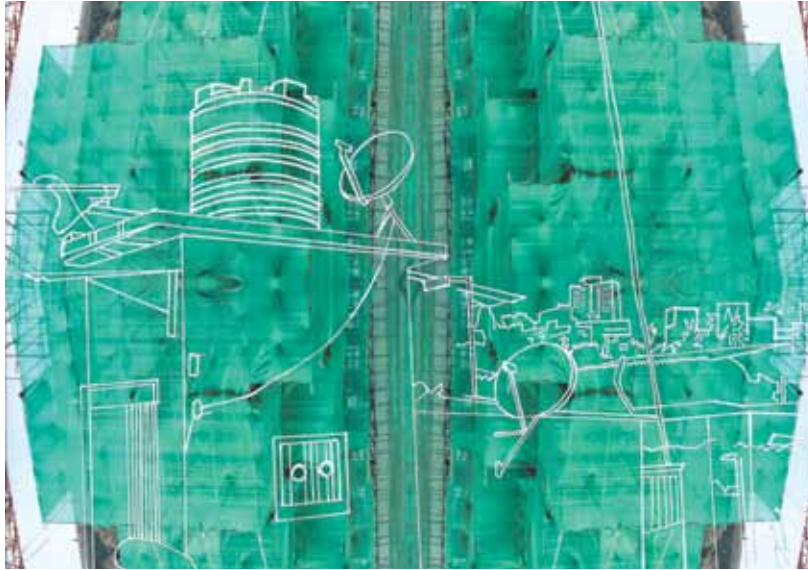
Run Way — I
Archival prints on archival board
12 x 18 inches
2015



Run Way — II
Archival prints on archival board
12 x 18 inches
2015



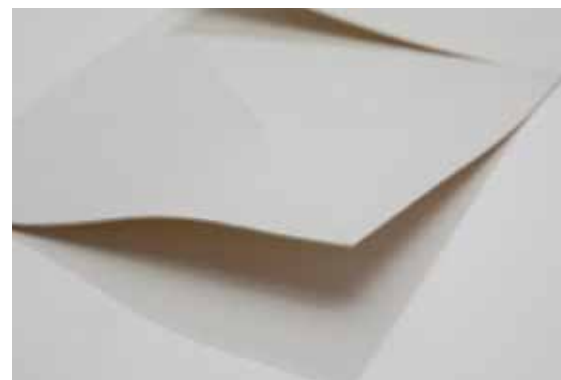
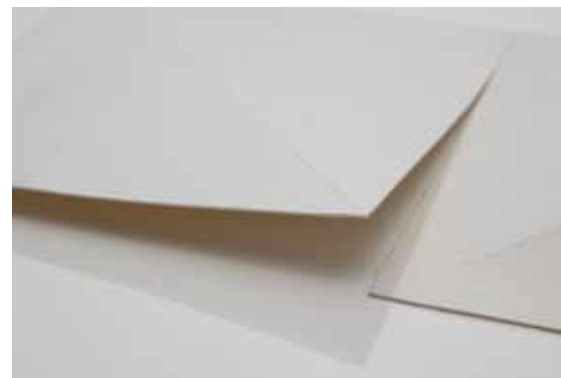
Superimpose V
Watercolour and digital
print on paper
6 x 8.5 inches
2015



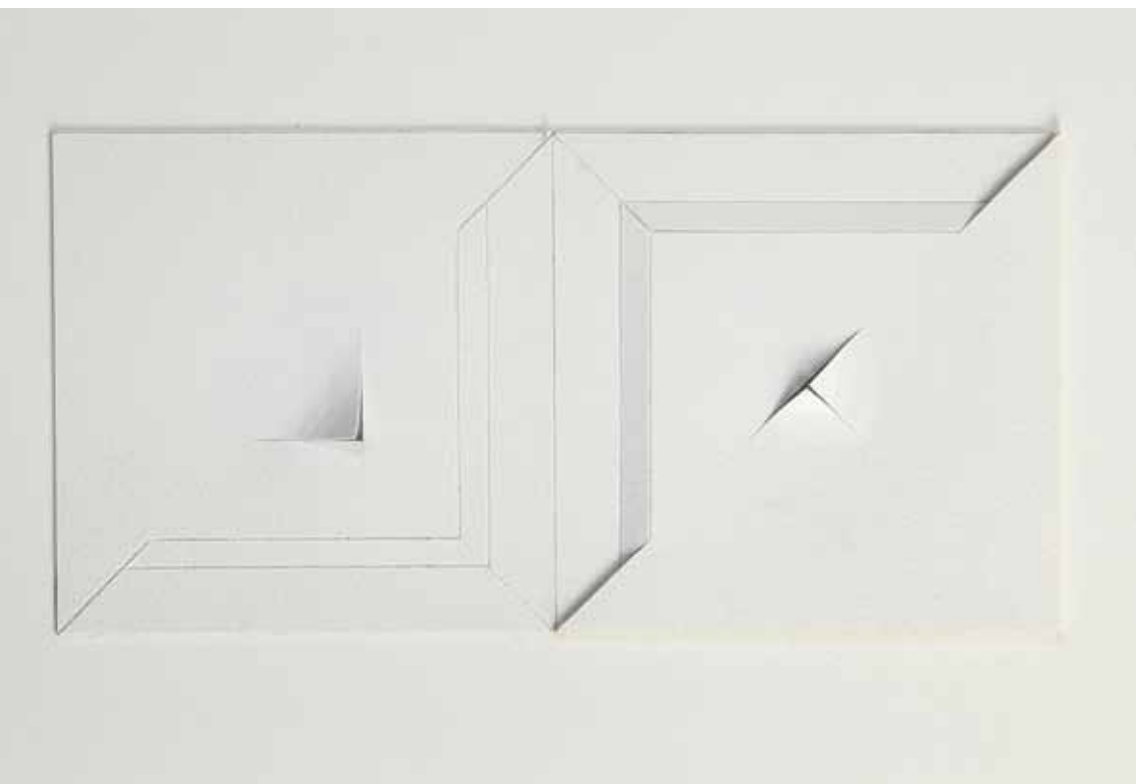
When the Corner is in the Centre — I
Archival paper on archival board
10 x 14.5 inches
2015

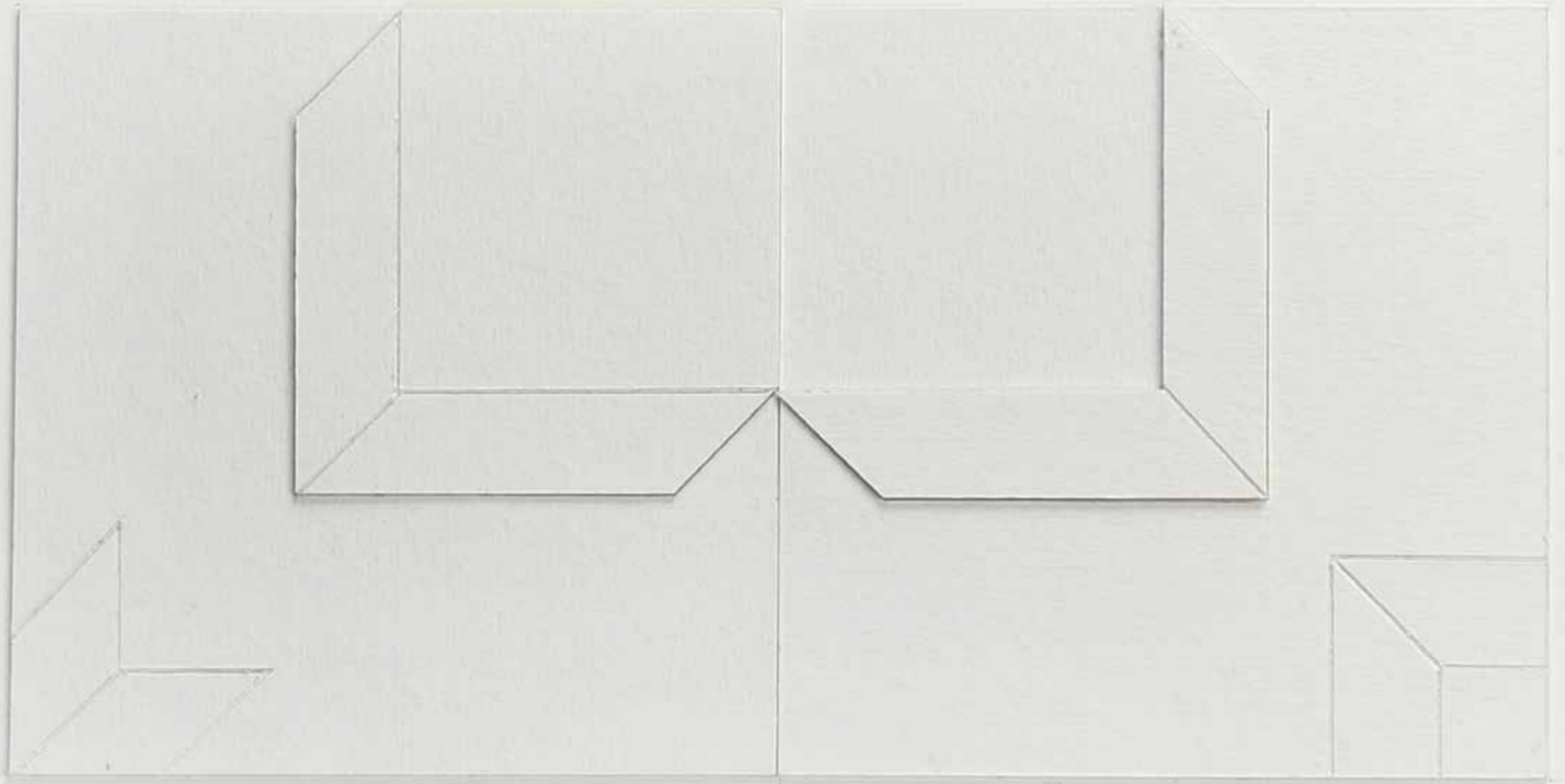


When the Corner is in the Centre — II
Archival paper on archival board
10 x 14.5 inches
2015



When the Corner is in the Centre — III
Archival paper on archival board
10 x 14.5 inches
2015





When the Corner is in the Centre — IV
Archival paper on archival board
10 x 14.5 inches
2015



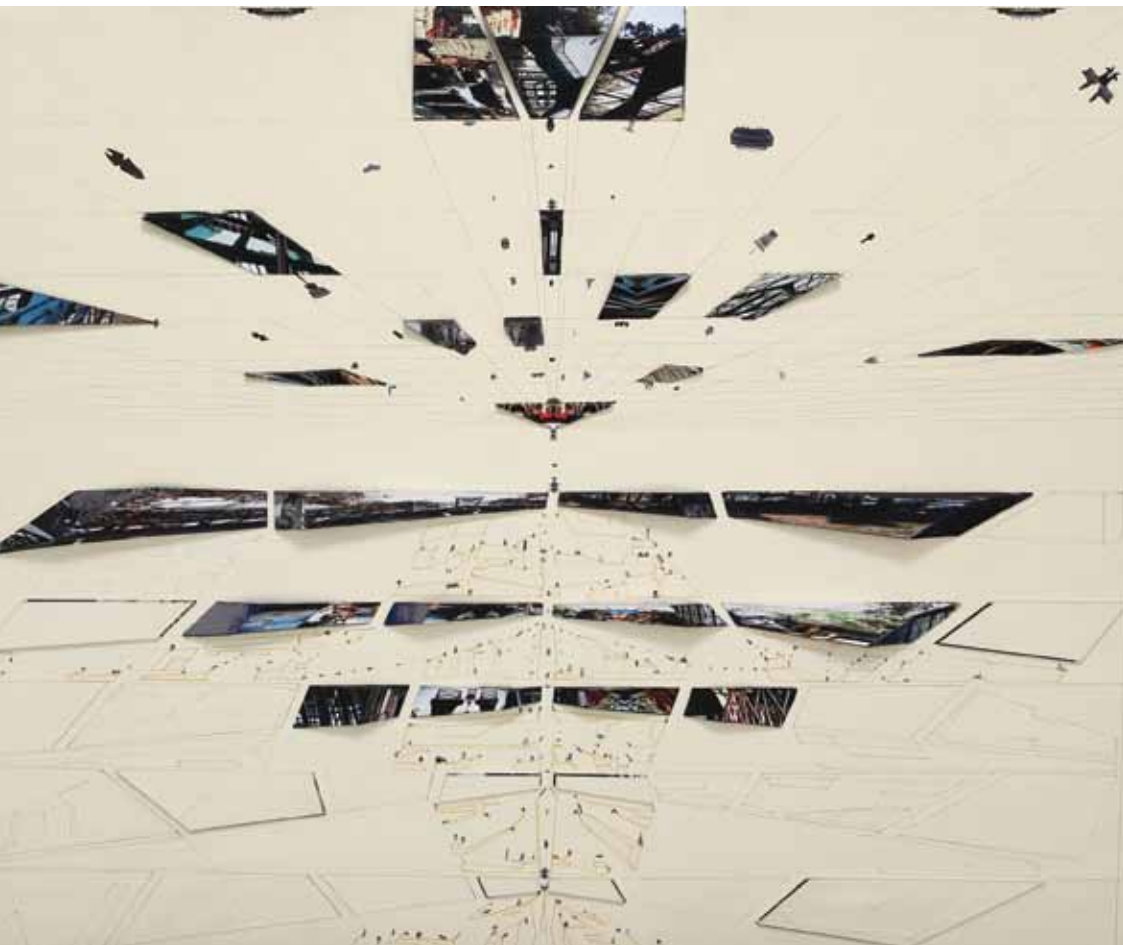
Bombard - I
Archival prints and drawings on archival board
12 x 18 inches (each)
2014



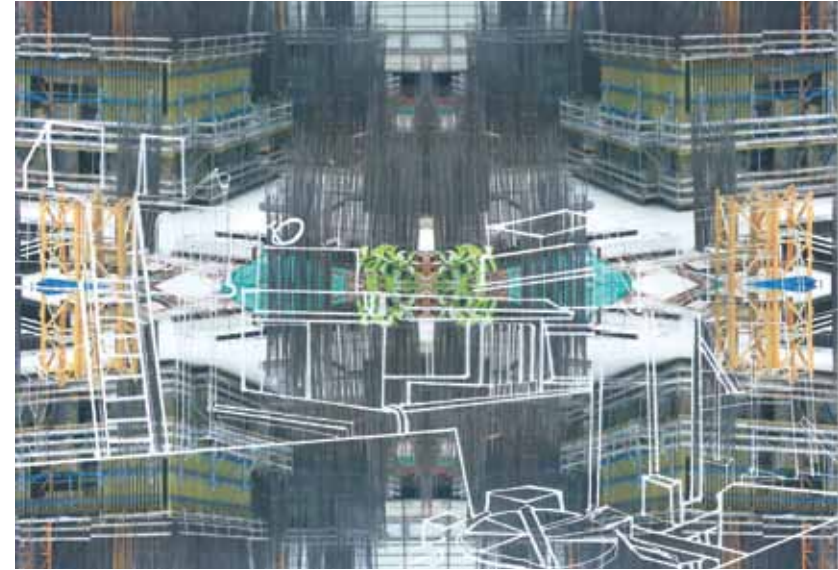
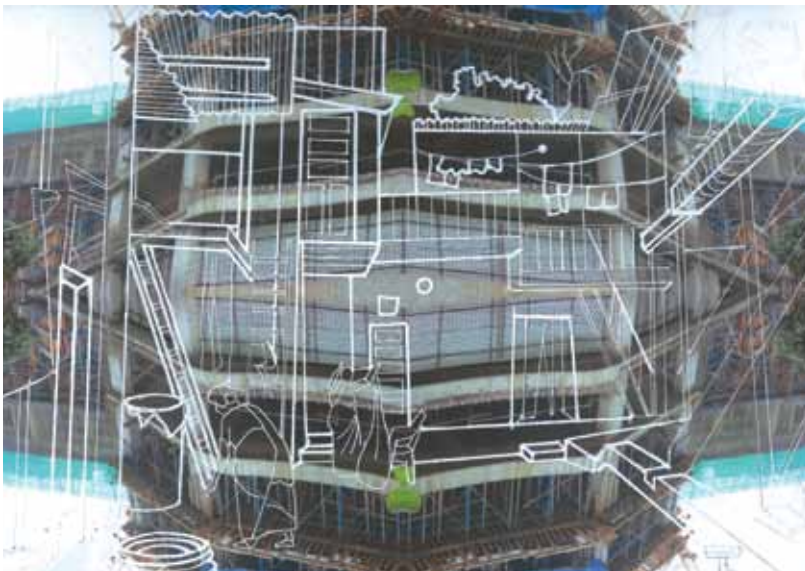
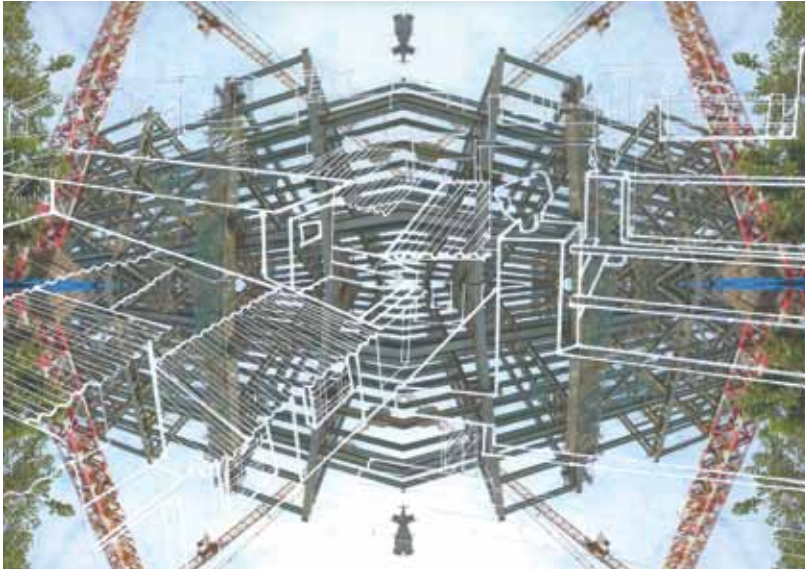
Bombard - II
Archival prints and drawings on archival board
12 x 18 inches (each)
2014



A Tension
Archival prints and acrylic colours on archival board
30 x 36 inches
2015



Superimpose III
Watercolour and digital
print on paper
6 x 8.5 inches
2015





Inverse Proportion
Archival prints on
archival board
15 x 40 inches (each)
2015

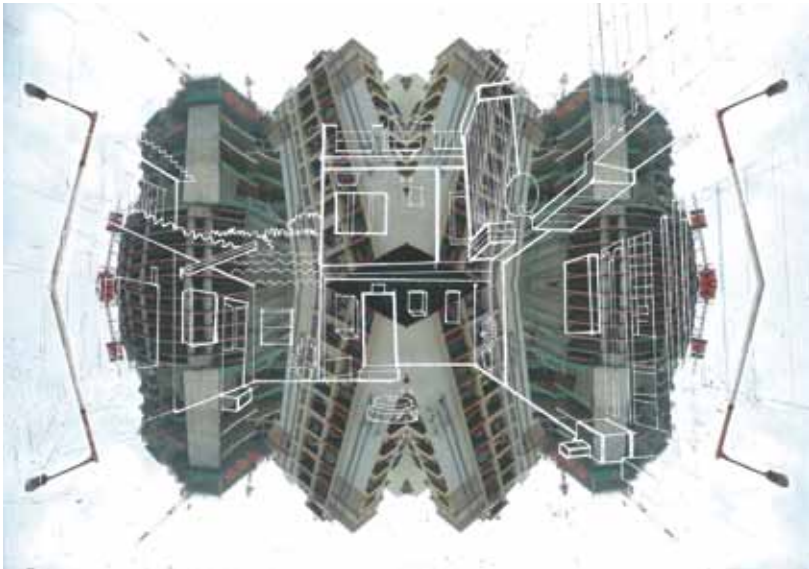
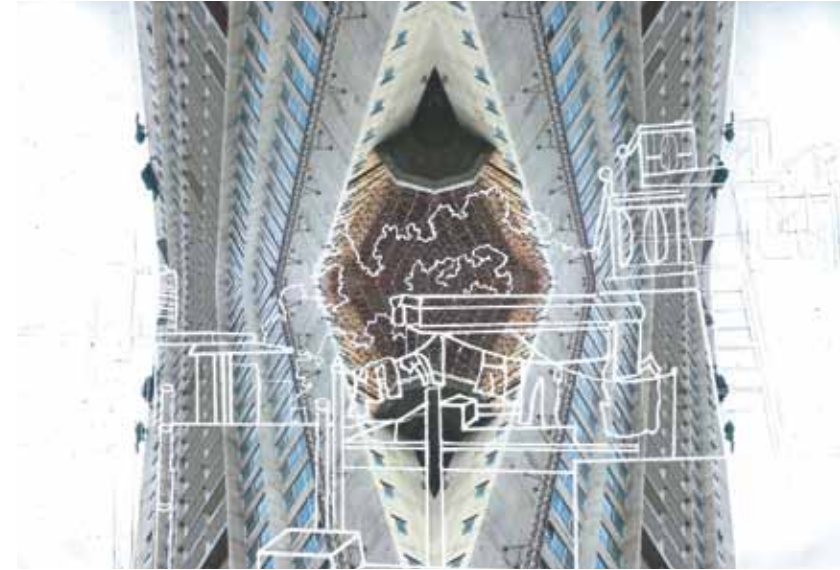
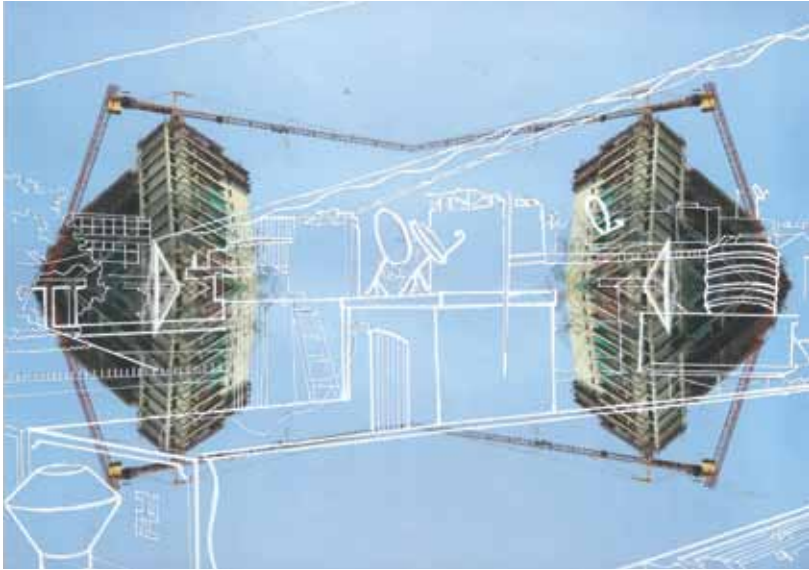


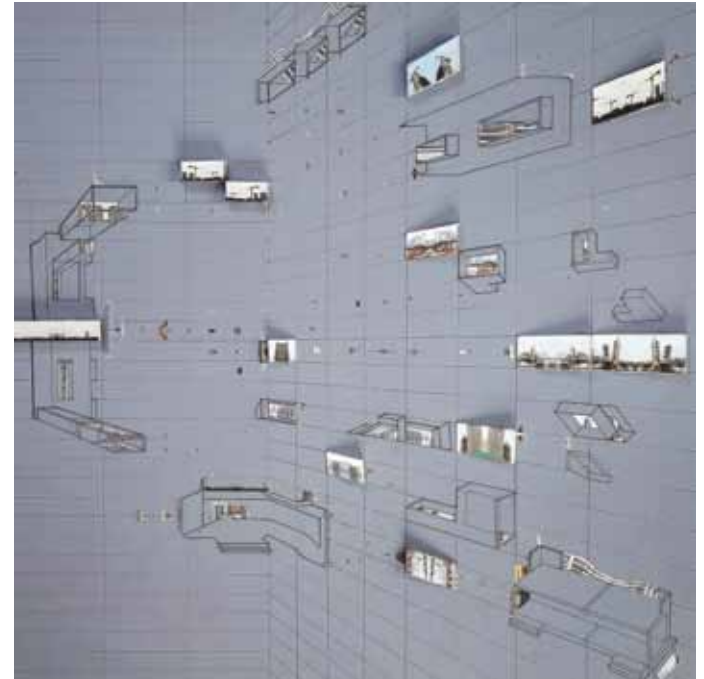
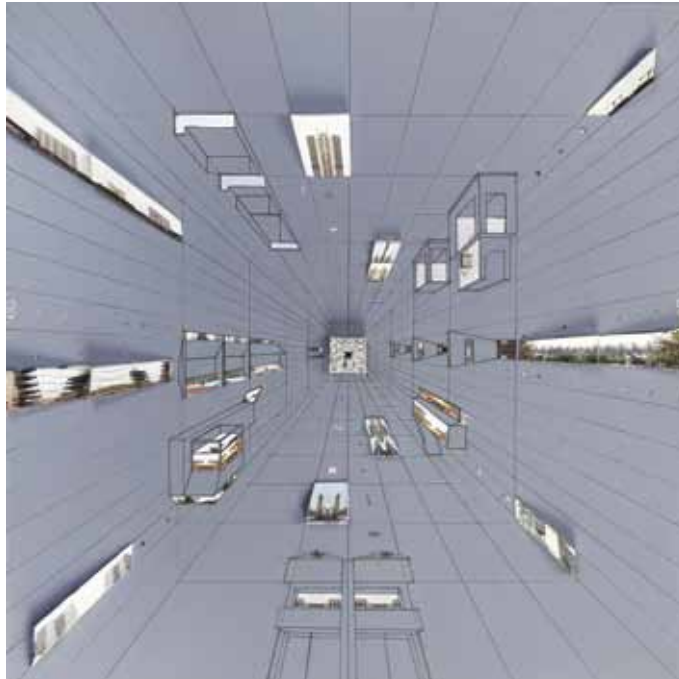
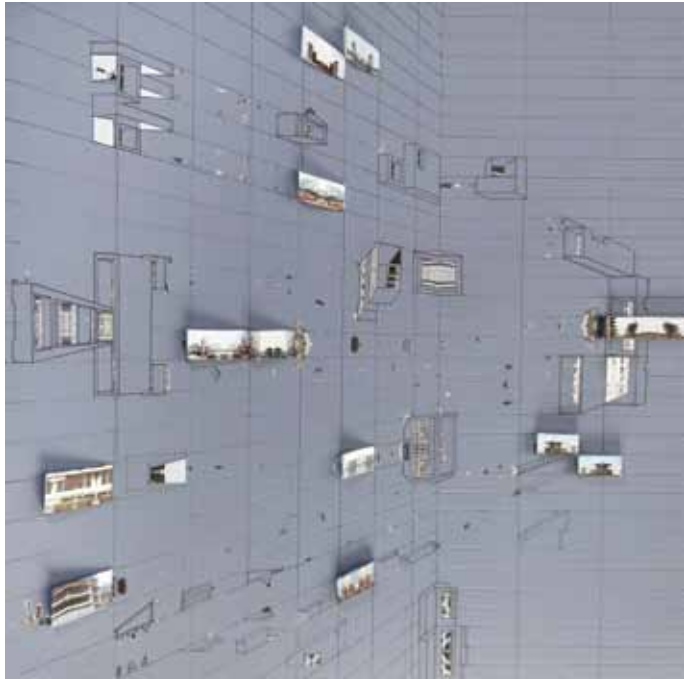
Black Whole
Archival prints, drawings and
engravings on archival board
29.6 x 36.2 inches
2014



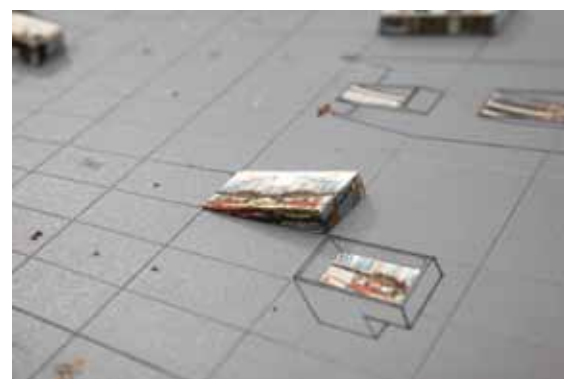
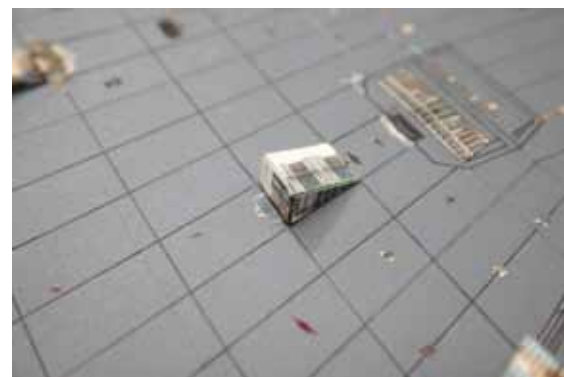
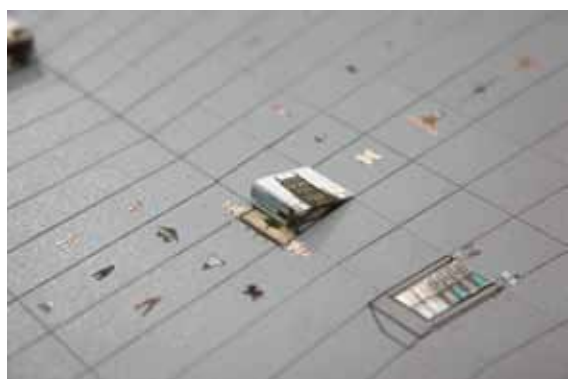
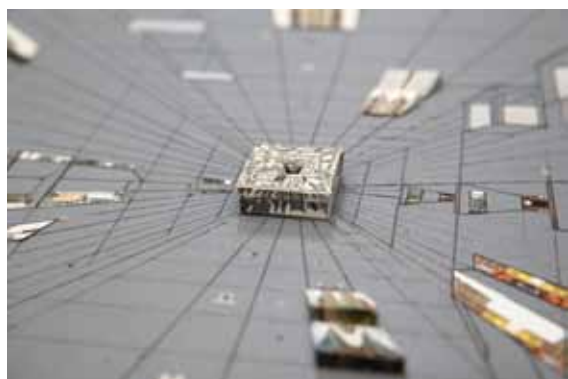
Between the Two Voids
Inkjet on archival paper
42 x 126 inches
2015

Superimpose II
Watercolour and digital
print on paper
6 x 8.5 inches
2015

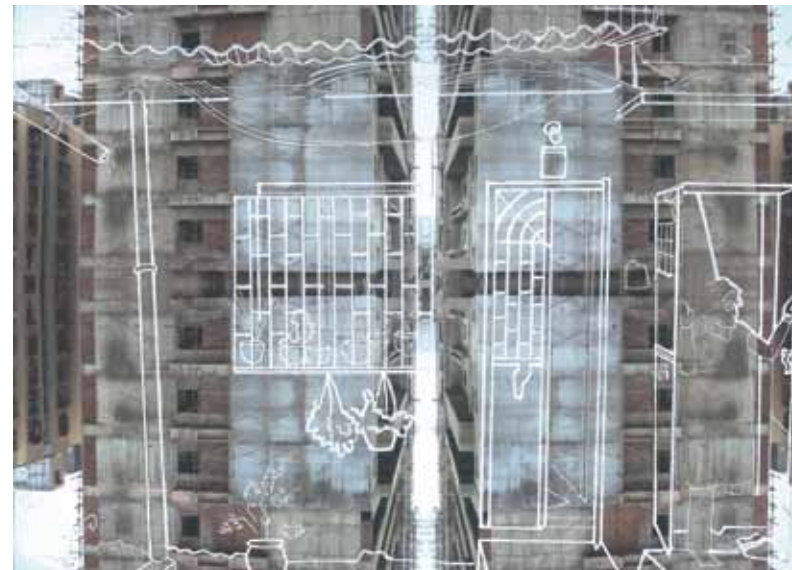
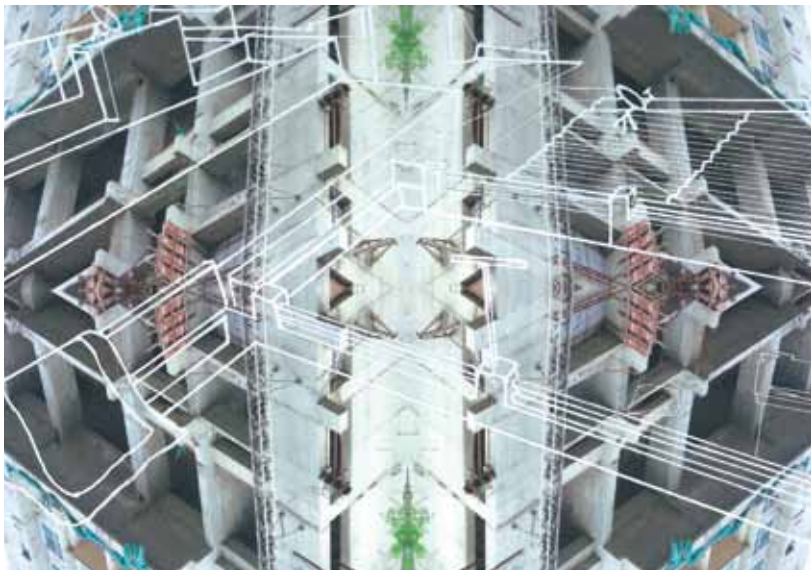


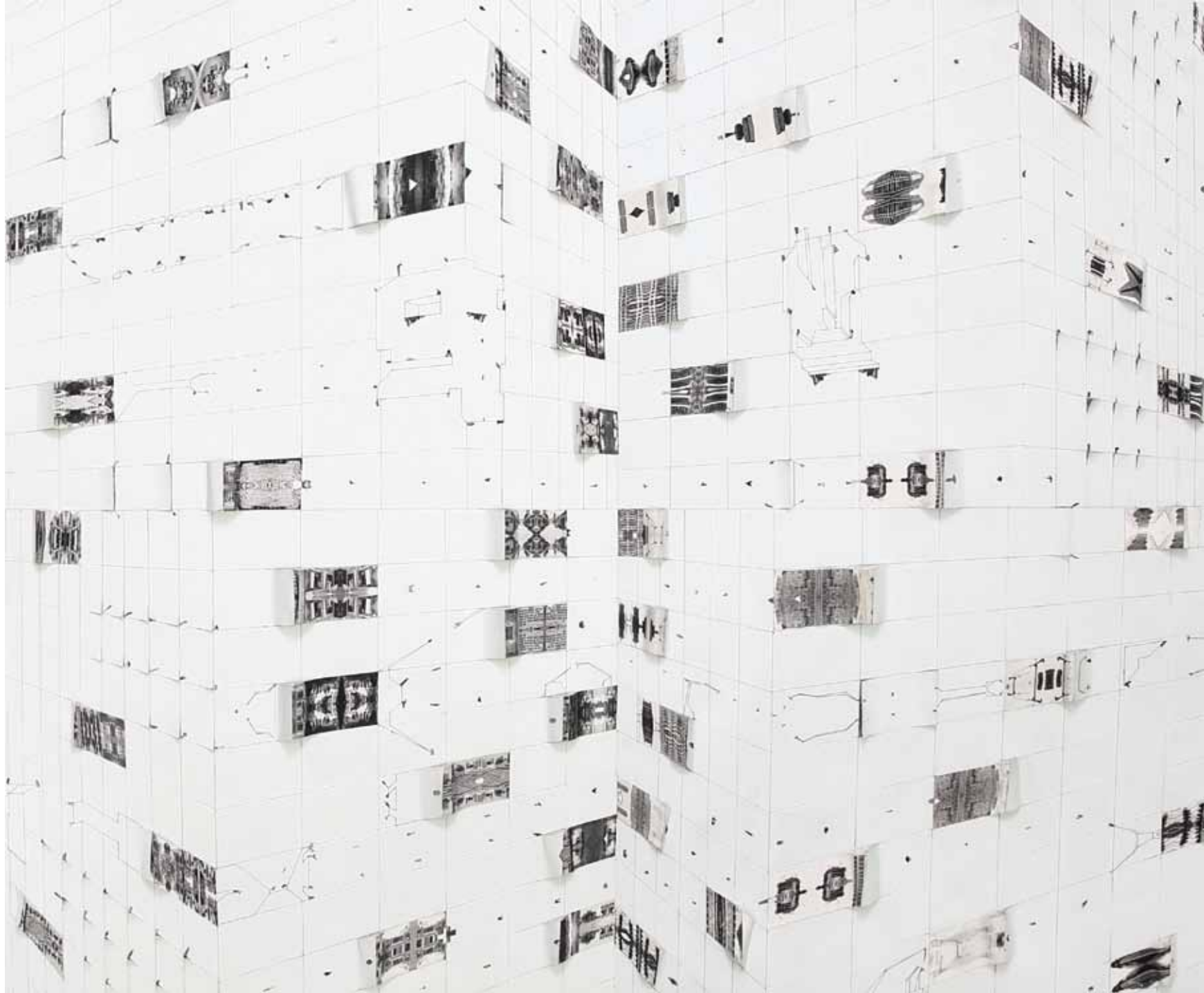


City Escape
Archival prints on archival board
25 x 25.5 inches (each)
2015



Superimpose IV
Watercolour and digital
print on paper
6 x 8.5 inches
2015





Gap in the Mind — III
Archival prints, drawings and
engravings on archival board
29.6 x 36.2 inches
2014



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Pratap Morey is a Mumbai-based artist with a post-graduate diploma in Indian Aesthetics from Mumbai University and a graduate degree in Fine Art from Vasai Vikasini College of Visual Arts.

Over the last few years, Pratap has participated in several curated group shows, including *The Unbearable Closeness of Being* at Gallery Engendered, New Delhi (2015); the *Art on Paper* biennale at the Weatherspoon Art Museum, North Carolina, USA (2014); *Interstices* at the Kochi-Muziris Biennale (2012); *Stop Making Sense* at False Ceiling Gallery, Mumbai (2012); and *@rt Virtually Real* at Art Alive Gallery, New Delhi (2012) among others. His art fair participation includes United Art Fair, curated by Meera Menezes, New Delhi (2013) and India Art Fair, New Delhi (2013), represented by Art Alive Gallery.

Pratap has participated in several residencies such as the residency programme of the Harmony Art Foundation, India (2015); the Artists-In-Residence programme hosted by the President of India at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi (2014); CRACK International Residency, Bangladesh (2013); the Artist Residency programme at Space 118, Mumbai (2012); and at the Uttarayan Art Foundation, Vadodara (2012).

He is the recipient of several awards such as the Bendre-Husain-Scholarship, India (2013); La Critique award at Salon des Réalités Nouvelles, France (2012); and fellowship for a mid-career artist by Bajaj Capital Art House, India (2012).

EXHIBITIONS

GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

2015:

- We Have Some Stardust, NIV Art Centre, New Delhi
- Artists for Nepal – A charity show at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi
- The 377191 Wall, Gallery Beyond, Mumbai
- The Unbearable Closeness of Being, Gallery Engendered, New Delhi

2014:

- Art on Paper — 2014, Weatherspoon Art Museum, North Carolina, USA
- WATCHOUT! Art Alive Gallery, New Delhi

2013:

- Versatile Thoughts, Percept Art, Mumbai

2012:

- Interstices, curated by Neelima Jayachandran; Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2012, Kochi
- Stop Making Sense, False Ceiling Gallery, Mumbai
- @RT Virtually Real, curated by Georgina Maddox; Art Alive Gallery, New Delhi
- VERNISAGGE, Salon des Réalités Nouvelles, Paris, France

2011:

- disORAGANISED, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
- Movement, Medium, Metaphor, curated by Georgina Maddox; NIV Art Centre, New Delhi

ART FAIRS:

- United Art Fair, curated by Peter Nagy, New Delhi
 - India Art Fair, represented by Art Alive Gallery, New Delhi
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RESIDENCIES:

2015:

- Artist-in-Residence at the Harmony Art Foundation, Mumbai

2014:

- Artist-in-Residence at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, hosted by the President of India, New Delhi

2013:

- CRACK International Residency, Kushtia, Bangladesh

2012:

- Artist-in-Residence at Space 118, Mumbai
- Artist-in-Residence at Uttarayan Art Foundation, Vadodara

2011:

- International Artist Residency at NIV Art Centre, New Delhi; curated by Georgina Maddox

AWARDS:

2013:

- Bendre-Husain Scholarship for a mid-career artist

2012:

- La Critique award at Salon des Réalités Nouvelles, Paris
- Fellowship for a mid-career artist by Bajaj Capital Art House, New Delhi

2006:

- The Bombay Art Society Award for Painting
 - N S Bendre Foundation Award for Painting, 29th Monsoon Show, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
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Produced by

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Artwork by Pratap Morey

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