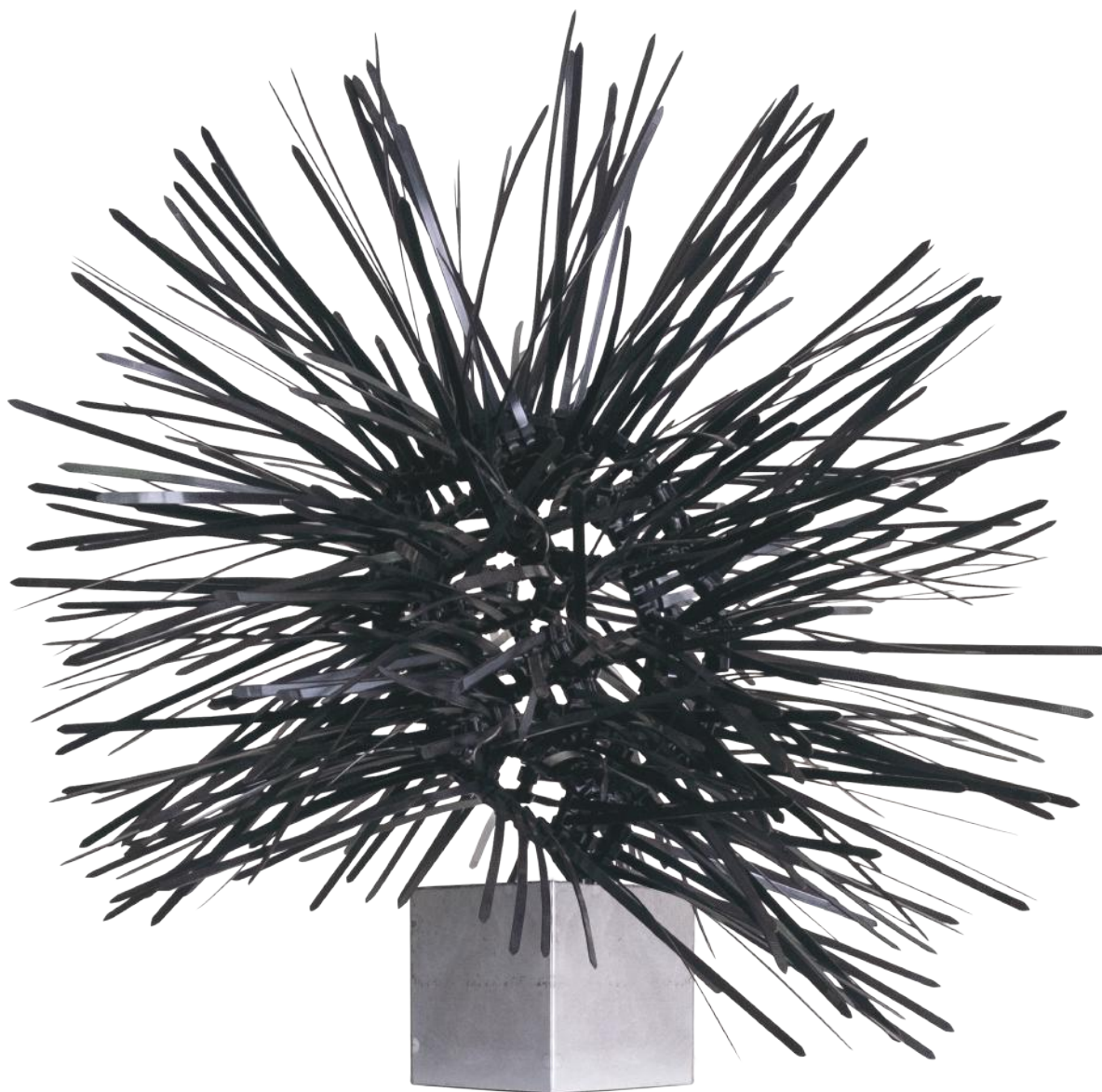


E X H I B I T I O N C A T A L O G U E

THE
GREEN LINE



PEIDRO PIRES

— 05.05 // 25.06 —



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THE **GREEN LINE**

THIS IS NOT A WHITE CUBE Contemporary Art Gallery presents in Lisbon "The Green Line," a solo exhibition by the Luso-Angolan artist Pedro Pires, which marks his return to the Portuguese capital after more than a decade of a growing presence in the international art scene.

The exhibition is curated by Lourenço Egreja. The title "**THE GREEN LINE**" stems from the appropriation of Francis Alys' homonymous work's name and the designation given to the Armistice border, defined at the end of the Arab-Israeli armed conflict in 1948. The border's name - "Green Line" - results from the colour of the pen used in the 1949 negotiations to draw on the map and define the boundaries of the territory. In his 2004 performative work, Alys walks along the "Green Line", spilling green paint on the ground as he passes to create a line along this route.

IN THE ARTISTS WORDS

"In the same way that I appropriate certain objects in order to make use of the contexts to which they belong, I am interested, in the context of this exhibition, in the act of appropriating this title and its intersection with the works presented.

Thinking about borders and nationalities has been a constant in my artistic practice and also in my personal sphere. In this context, it is relevant to the feeling of belonging that I devote to the two countries in which I am national - Angola and Portugal. In societies of a global world, this duality has become an increasingly present condition. Bodies that move from one territory to another, between nations, continents, cultures, religions, habits and legacies. Metamorphic bodies that propel transformation around them.

The idea of the frontier is embodied in very diverse ways, our skin being the primordial frontier with the world. It is a cellular membrane, an organ that both covers the body and separates it from its surroundings. It is simultaneously sensitive and reactive. It is the point of physical contact between the self and the other.

In my sculptures, I try to integrate objects linked to specific contexts: symbolic objects, although often "invisible" due to the functional character they assume in society. This neutrality of the object, which is, in a way, trivial and transversely recognized, is essential for me to create tension in the works I produce.

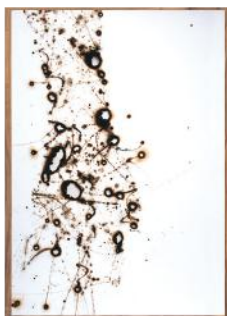
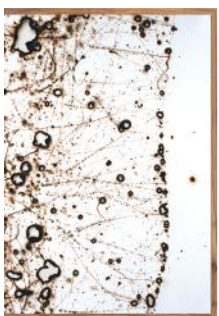
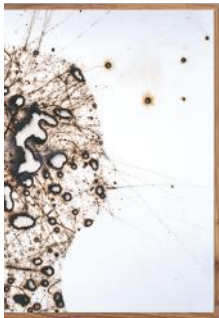
The function attributed to them often carries an important symbolic component. Examples of this are the decorative metallic foliage, as objects of industrial production used to decorate gates, railings, and fences. Their function is none other than to embellish the "division" and to encapsulate the idea of "border", neutralizing it and promoting its abstraction.

Luanda, the city where I was born, is populated by fences that, as time passed, became part of the aesthetics of the city. The works "Border Series", on display, are inspired by this aesthetic of the Angolan capital - a city full of barriers that reflect the society that inhabits it, in its tremendous economic, political and social disparities.

As a final proposition, I transcribe a phrase by Francis Alys that I like a lot and deeply identify with. It reflects very well the way I understand the acts of producing sculpture and drawing, which are, from a personal point of view, very distinct. Sculpture always involves more reflection, more density of thought, and in a way, a more political content. Drawing, on the other hand, stems from a more poetic and intuitive approach."

"Sometimes doing something poetic can become political, and sometimes doing something political can become poetic"





“I have known Pedro Pires work since 2006 and for some time something has interested me: the artist's ability to create a simulacrum that points towards an archaeological reality or to imagery of distant times. This is one of several characteristics of his production, which I intend to analyse in the context of the solo exhibition held at THIS IS NOT A WHITE CUBE gallery in Lisbon.

Archaeology, the study of ancient civilizations through material means, has its origins in the human curiosity, sometimes obsessive, of some individuals for the research of lost cultures. For example Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778-1823) was an explorer who worked in circuses in the United Kingdom, in the entertainment industry and who, given his engineering background, was eventually hired to transport the famous bust of Ramses II weighing more than two tons in a couple of days. This work is still in the British Museum today, and Belzoni became famous for this achievement and for having his name engraved behind one of the ears of the bust. He was also known for not using explosives when opening graves and for having discovered the entrance to the pyramid of Quefren, in 1818, in which he also left his name engraved so that he would not be deprived of the credit for such an incredible discovery. He also moved thousands of objects from Egypt to the United Kingdom.

Although many consider Belzoni a tomb thief, some believe that it was with him and others like Flinders Petrie (1853-1942) and his famous studies on Egyptian daily life or even with Lord Elgin (1766-1841) best known for having removed a considerable portion of the sculptures from the Parthenon of Athens, which today can be found in the British Museum under the name of Parthenon Sculptures, that the systematic interest in the discovery and inventory of objects from lost civilizations began. Such interest, anthropological, scientific or even commercial, was the core of the fascination for ancient objects. The passage of time or the patina effect played an important role in revelation of these objects to the western world with Museums and collectors becoming the taste makers of the time.

Pedro Pires' drawings, through their form and also by the technique, present us with images of upright human bodies, in groups or individually, which transport us to other distant times. To the times of the first archaeological discoveries and of the adventurers referred above. The chromatic interventions made by the artist seem to indicate the passage of time and the effect of patina, unveiling that distant and mysterious past. Who are these anonymous figures that the artist presents us with? Are they figures of today's times?

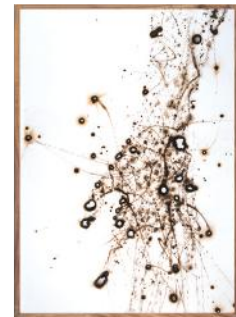
Perhaps. Are they representations of other times? Perhaps. These ambiguities are the key to understand our fascination and interest in artefacts made by our ancestors and help decode some of the great mysteries of humanity. This is the simulacrum that the two-dimensional works of Pedro Pires display.

On the other hand, the artist also presents us in this exhibition another body of work, equally figurative, which he has been developing since 2006. Busts and sculptures of human forms, usually in an erect pose, like the Kouros, (from the Greek "Young Boy"), made from metal elements used in window railings, gates and fences - domestic, private and institutional. Pires reuses or gives a new function to these small decorative objects. The aggregation and composition generates busts and figures that are translucent bodies, giving rise to a sense of lightness in what would supposedly be dense, opaque and heavy.

This appropriation of industrial accessories takes on its Duchampian splendour in the busts made by Pedro Pires with industrial zip ties, which were neither designed nor produced for this purpose. Once again, Pires plays with the ideas of time, as Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) in 1917 had already introduced the idea of the Ready Made into the art world, with the possibility of an industrial object being taken over as artistic or as part of the work. Therefore, these are works of art conceived with modern-day materials, but with a reference to the archaic period of classical Greek sculpture, in a gesture that thus defines an immense panorama.

In another series of ten new works, the same path is followed by the artist in the sense of presenting us the human figure devastated by the action of time and also with direct references to the Kouros. In a similar pose and on a much smaller scale, inspired by a reading of the book *Species of spaces and Other* by Georges Perec's (1936-1982) and namely in the ideas developed about the space of the corner and of the corner, Pedro Pires models the human figure on a black surface to create the desired angles, as if there were walls or an architectural place where the bodies would be leaning against. But there is no three-dimensional space. Only a mysterious cosmos.

In general, the works shown in this exhibition highlight pictorial and plastic elements that point, as I mentioned above, to the effect of time and space on perception. Pedro Pires work clearly addresses the effects that agitate our historical consciousness. As Didi-Huberman mentions - "In front of the Image, we are always in front of time."





ABOUT THE ARTIST

Within his research, Pires is essentially concerned with questions of identity, namely with the sense of a disrupted national identity, which the artist himself has experienced in his existence as an Angolan and Portuguese citizen. Using different techniques and everyday objects, the artist constructs unique figurative and conceptual sculptures and installations, marked by anthropomorphic forms that emerge from partially destroyed materials, evoking the concepts of destruction and reconstruction. In his work, Pires reflects his unique social and political position towards Angola, Portugal, and the post-colonial framework that marks the history between these two countries. By drawing parallels with different realities, he also urges us to ponder issues such as the contemporary reality of refugees and human rights more broadly.

Pedro Pires concluded his MFA in the Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design (London) in 2010, and a BA in Sculpture in 2005, at the Fine Art Faculty of Lisbon. He also received the Fine Art Erasmus Scholarship for the University of Athens in 2004. With an artistic career that spans more than ten years, his work has been exhibited in places such as the Museum of African Art (Belgrade, Serbia), the National Museum of Natural History in Angola, the Museum of Fine Arts (Montreal, Canada), 1:54 Art Fair and Christie's (London, UK), Lagos Biennial (Nigeria), Cape Town Art Fair (South Africa), Grand Palais – ArtParis (France), Lorne Biennale, (Australia), and ExpoChicago (Chicago, USA).

Pires' work is held in significant private and public collections, including the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (Canada), the PLMJ Foundation (Portugal), the Mishcon de Reya Collection (UK), Edge Arts (Portugal), Carde Diem Editions (Portugal), the Coca Cola Collection (South Africa), Banco Económico (Angola), the S&A Collection (Portugal), Viseu Council (Portugal), Africana Art Foundation, the collection of Fernando Figueiredo Ribeiro (Portugal), João de Brito (Angola), and Costa Lopes (Portugal).

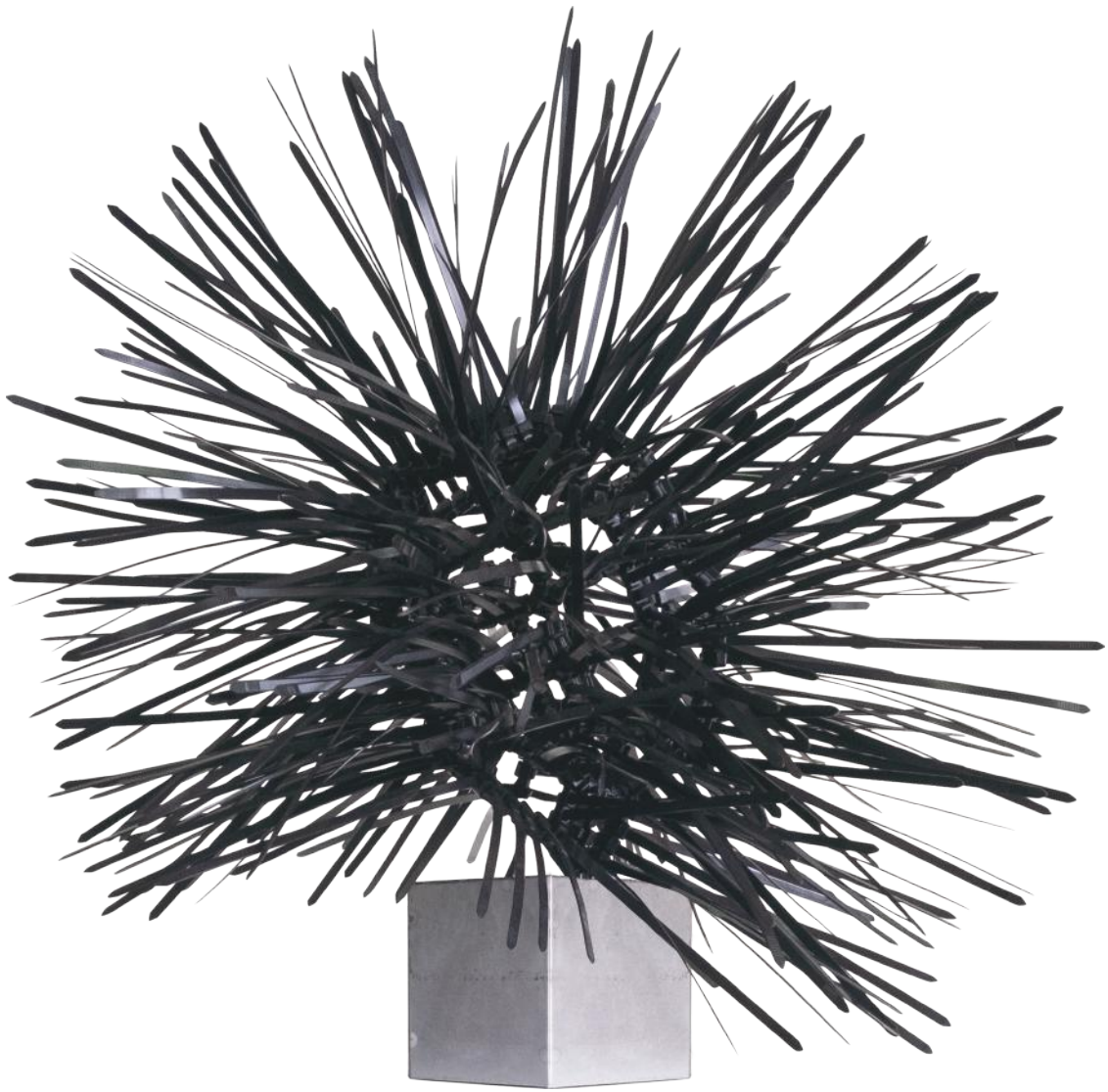




Inner expansion #1, 2020

Intervention on paper
190 x 113 cm
(PP206)





Antifragility - expansion, 2021

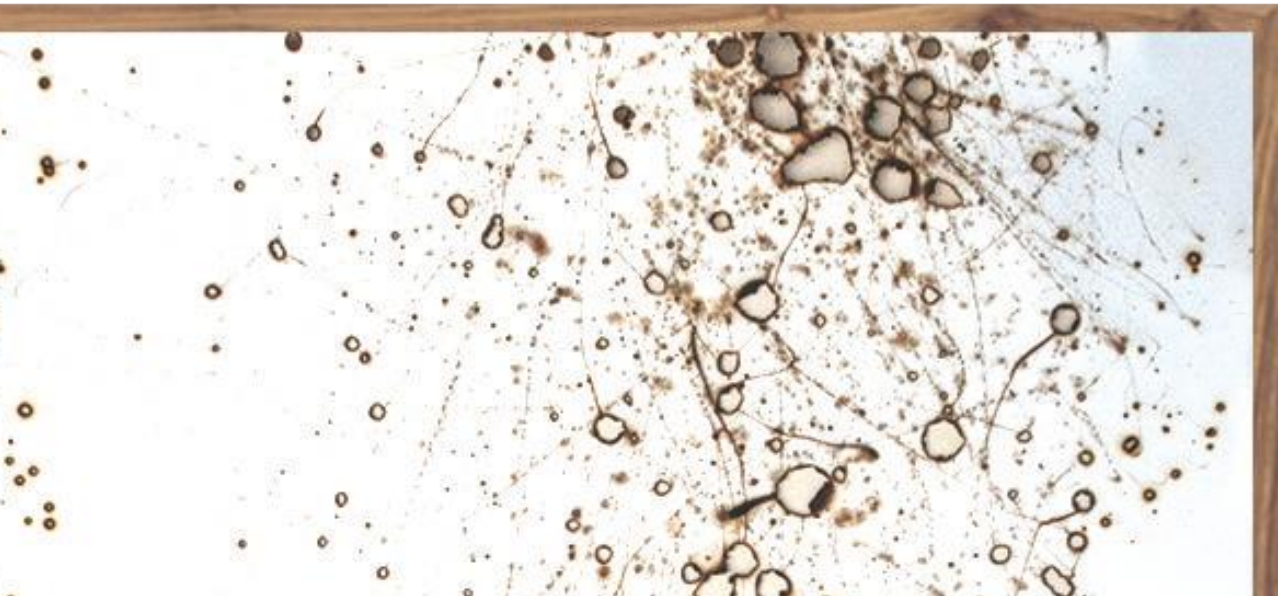
Zip ties on metal
70 x 75 x 70 cm
(PP205)





Wall, 2022

Sculpture on paper
202 x 190 cm
(PP214)





Inner expansion #2, 2020

Intervention on paper
190 x 113 cm
(PP207)

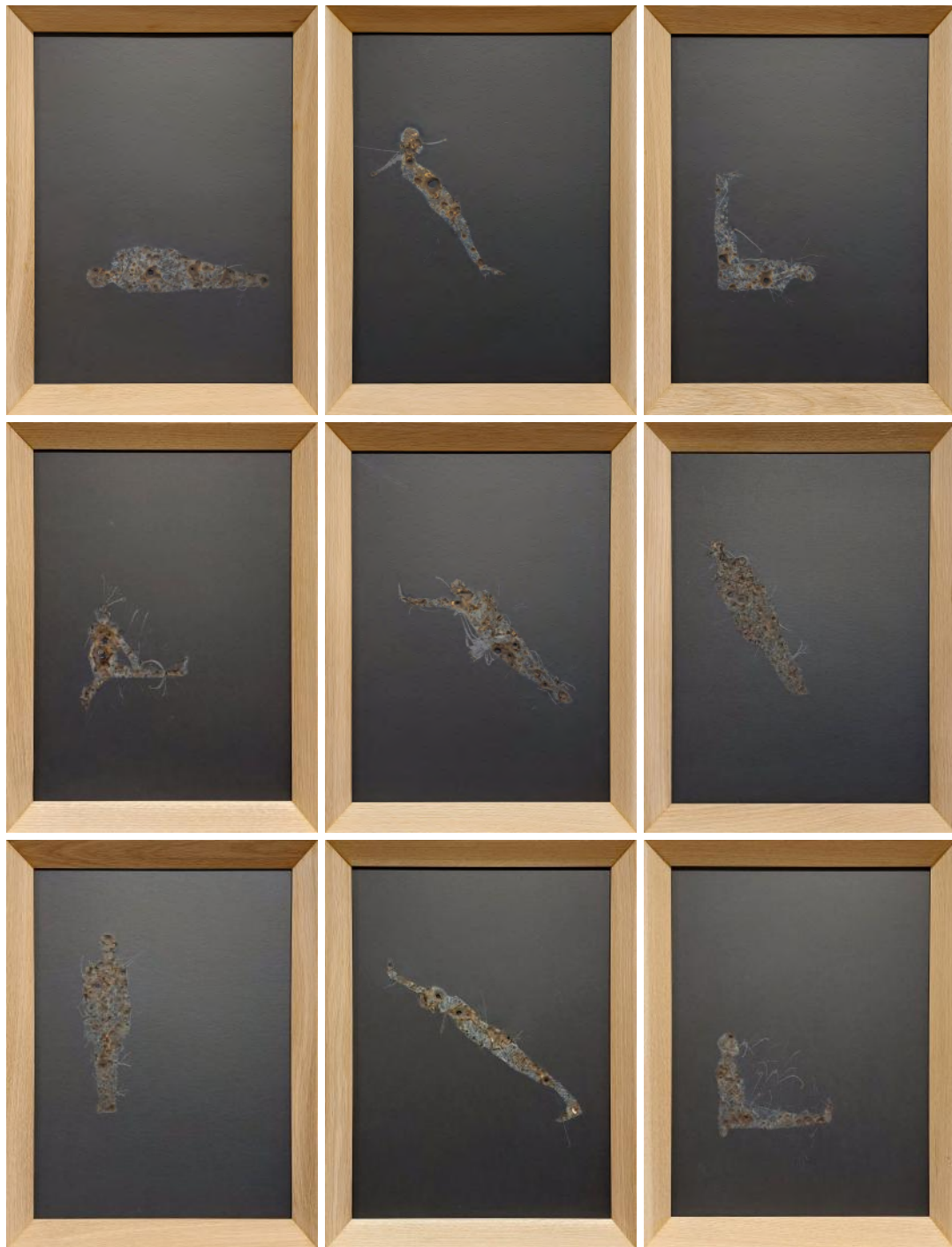




Border #317.2, 2021

Metal
50 x 35 x 33 cm
(PP227)





Boden, Wand, Ecke, Raum Series, 2022

Sculpture on paper
30 x 40 cm
(PP216)

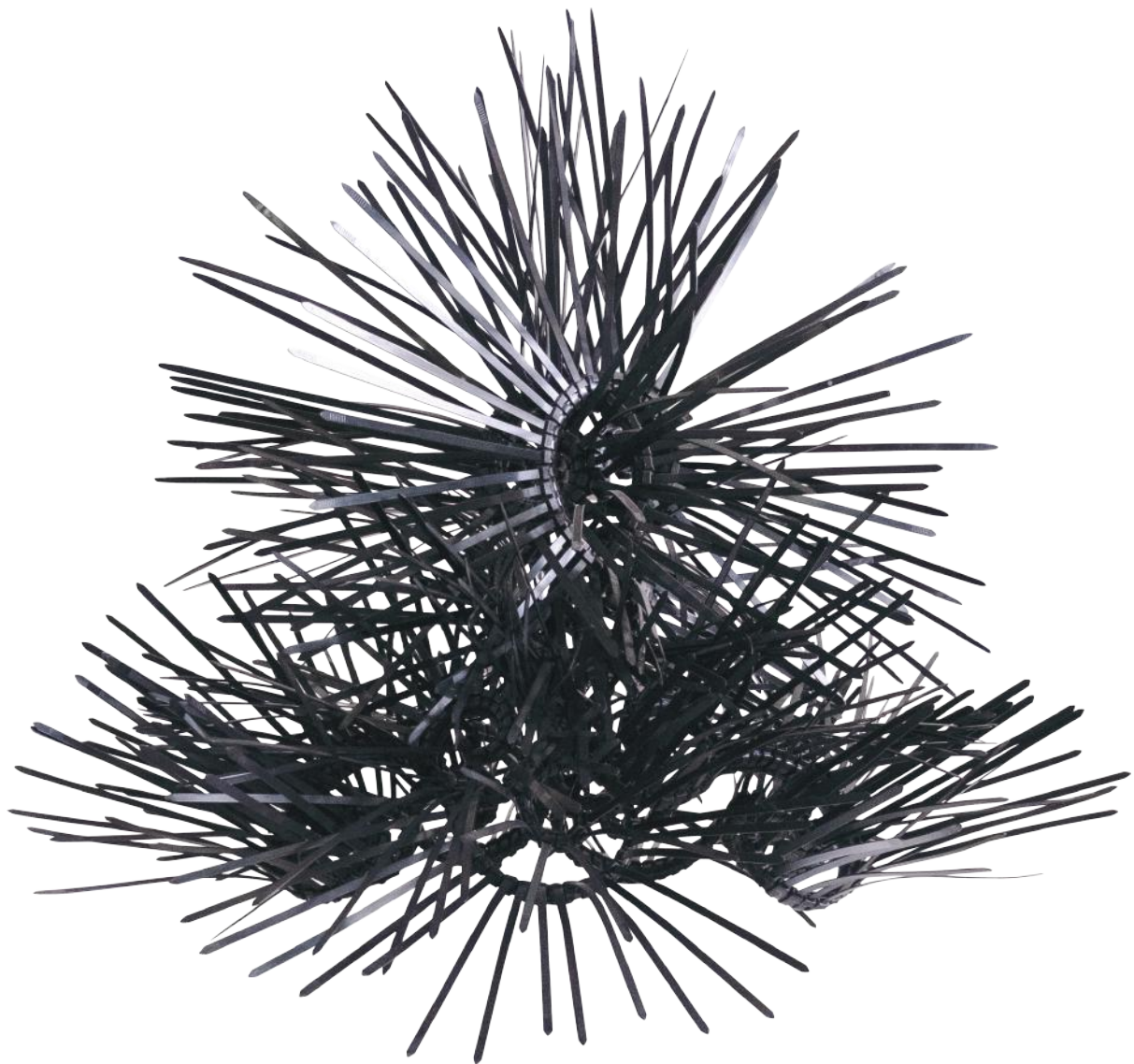




Border Series 657.13, 2022

Metal
195 x 75 x 45 cm
(PP212)





Antifragility - expansion #2, 2021

Zip ties on metal
70 x 90 x 80 cm
(PP228)



THIS NOT A WHITE CUBE is an international contemporary art gallery with exhibition spaces in Luanda (Angola) and Lisbon (Portugal). Representing and collaborating with international established and emergent artists, the gallery's program focuses on relevant and powerful narratives and discussions associated with the African continent and its diaspora. Despite the profound connection with Africa, it is the first Contemporary African gallery in Portugal that focuses not exclusively on Lusophone circles but also the emerging aesthetics of cultural and artistic productions from the Global South. The gallery maintains a regular and significant presence in important international art fairs.

THIS NOT A WHITE CUBE extends its intervention beyond the physicality of the gallery space with exhibition projects that enhance the extension of the art world to a multiplicity of places, inviting curators and artists in occasional collaborations that provide enriching visions and dialogues.

Founded in Luanda in 2016 by Sónia Ribeiro, current CEO, and becoming a leading art gallery in Angola, the project expanded in 2019 to one of Lisbon's most emblematic neighborhoods, Chiado. Given Portugal's historical connection with Africa, Lisbon was considered a natural location for this first expansion of the gallery and an important gateway to Europe.

Both exhibition spaces have an independent program, offering collectors and enthusiasts a focused and strong view of contemporary artistic production from the African and South American continents and their diaspora.





As of 2016, the Gallery has represented, exhibited, and collaborated with both emerging and established artists. Since then, the gallery has remained true to one of its primary goals of providing artists with the opportunity to share their unique perspectives through their work, thus creating and promoting discussions around relevant historical and contemporary narratives in the context of globalization.

As such, within an extensive yearly program that includes regular exhibitions in Lisbon and Luanda, the collaboration in diverse cultural projects, and a consistent presence on numerous international art fairs, attention is drawn to issues such as identity, memory, heritage, cultural heritage, and social change. In addition, artists from the gallery frequently feature on major platforms like museums, biennales, and important exhibitions around the globe.

Its three directors, Sónia Ribeiro, - CEO and founder - Graça Rodrigues, - curator - and Ngoi Salucombo - Executive director of the Angolan delegation - have a singular entrepreneurial and artistic vision based on a solid curatorial and collaborative - based art project approach.

In 2019, the gallery founded "O CUBO", a non-profit platform that seeks to boost experimentation and research, through the development of a program of artistic residencies, editorial projects, archive mapping, and the establishment of a network of local and international partnerships.

The gallery has already presented numerous exhibitions in Angola, South Africa, France, Italy, the UK, and Portugal but continues to expand and develop its connections worldwide.

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