

nicola guastamacchia
portfolio

Nicola Guastamacchia works at the intersection of art, law and politics, combining conceptual strategies with juridical inquiry to examine how symbols, traditions and collective habits are codified and reproduced within institutional frameworks across Europe, the Mediterranean and Italy. His projects engage with the shifting ideological foundations of national identities and the hegemonic forces that sustain them. Political imaginaries are approached both through their public symbols and forms of self-identification, and through intimate engagements with personal history, domestic memory and archival material. Moving between structural analysis and lived experience, his work considers how systems of representation consolidate authority and how inherited narratives continue to shape contemporary forms of belonging.

Nicola (Bari, Italy) holds a full degree in Law, the MLitt in Modern and Contemporary Art from the University of Glasgow, and the MFA in Fine Art from Kingston School of Art, where he studied at the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy (CRMEP). He is currently pursuing the PhD in Fine Art at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Catania. From 2017 to 2020 he served as Exhibitions Manager at Richard Saltoun Gallery, London. In 2020 he received the Italian Ministry of Culture's "Cantica 21" Award, followed by solo exhibitions at Fondazione Pino Pascali and the Italian Cultural Institute in Tunis in 2021. His work has been shortlisted for the Exibart Prize, the Nocivelli Prize and the "Un'opera per Castel Sant'Elmo" Award at Museo del '900, Naples. In 2022 he was awarded the Fondazione Ducci Prize (Rome) after partaking to the "Mare Nostrum – SeaCrossArt" residency in Fez, Morocco. His projects have been presented at the Italian Cultural Institute in London, the Italian Embassy in Ankara and the Italian Cultural Institute in Tirana, among other venues. He is actively engaged in curatorial initiatives in Southern Italy as co-founder of VOGA Art Project and director of In-ruins.

statement & bio

2015 - 2025
selected works

Ogni due giorni quattro generazioni

[Every two days four generations]

A 1920s vintage pendulum clock, passed down through four generations of the artist's family and manually wound every two days since, is installed over an enlarged photograph of the artist's grandparents as a young couple in the 1950s. Their image is mounted on wallpaper reproducing Achille Starace addressing a crowd in Bari in the early months of 1930. The work unfolds as a stratification of temporal regimes: the cyclical time of the pendulum, sustained through a repeated gesture of care; the suspended time of the photographic image; and the historical time of political rhetoric fixed in print. The act of winding the clock every two days becomes a minimal yet persistent measure of continuity, linking private inheritance to collective history. Time is not represented but materially enacted – accumulated, maintained, and transmitted across generations.

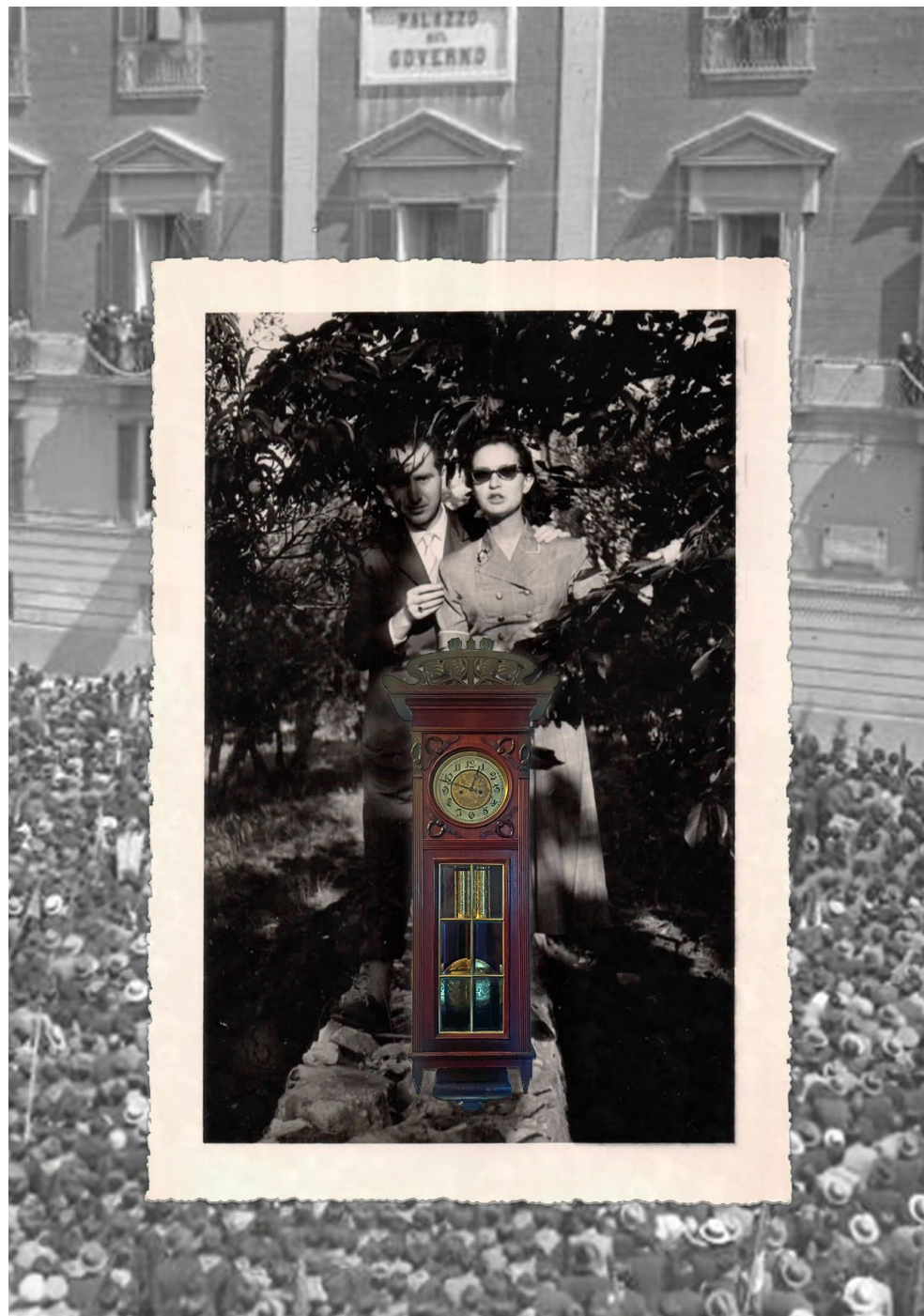
2025

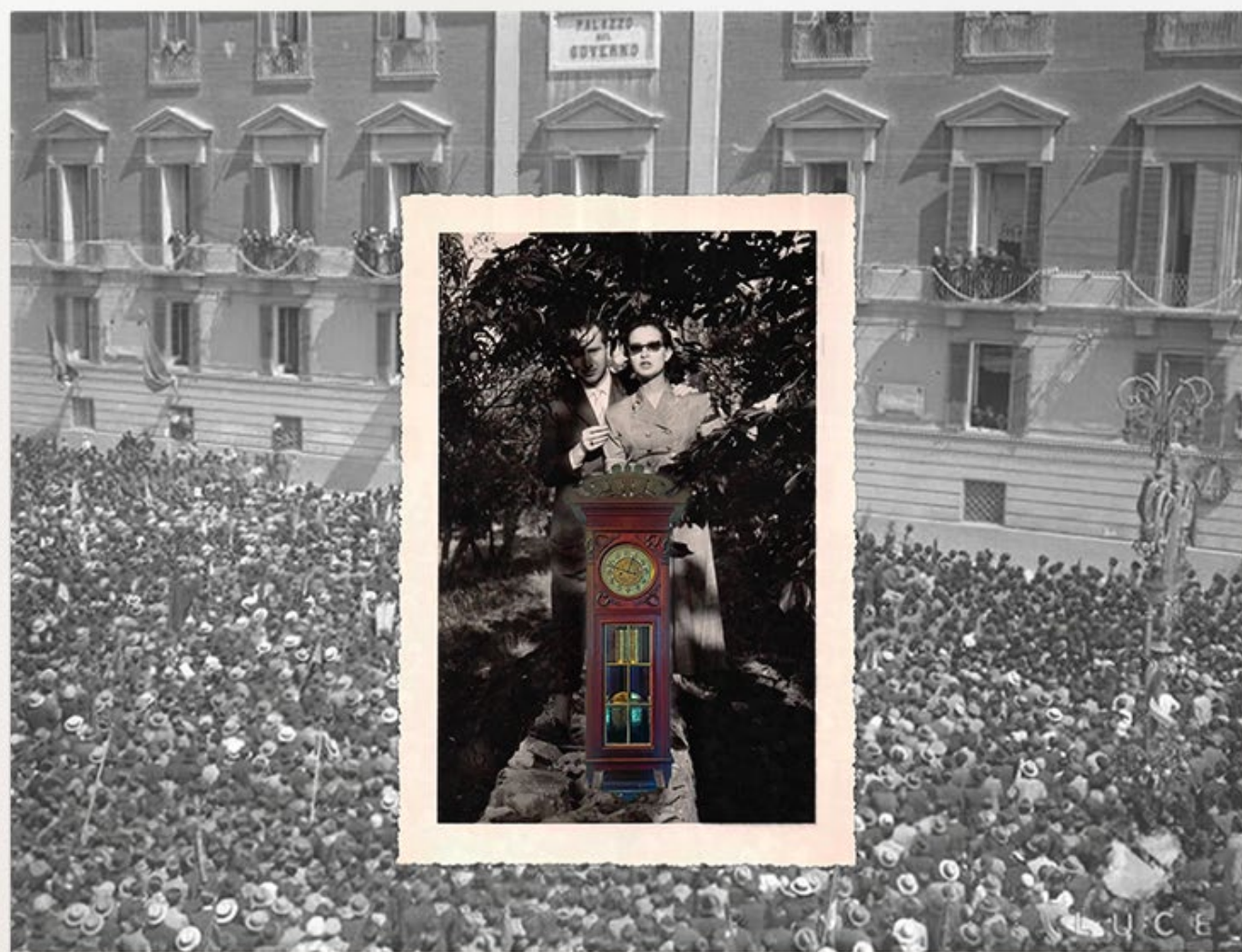
Pendulum clock, plotter-printed photograph, vinyl wallpaper

Pendulum: 110 x 30 x 15 cm

Photograph: 220 x 158 cm

Wallpaper: variable according to space





In casa non si corre
[No running in the house]

A series of five small works made from salvaged fragments of wallpaper and bell switches found in the grandparents' home, an old bourgeois apartment marked by habits, rituals and quiet hierarchies. In the 1980s and 1990s, the switches were used to summon housemaids, often women from Central Asia, whose labour sustained the household and who lived in the same space. For the grandchildren, among which the artist, those devices were objects of fascination and forbidden play, connected to a system they could not yet understand. The house operated through codes: service summoned by buttons, movement regulated by rules. "In casa non si corre" was the only injunction addressed to the children, yet it echoed the wider discipline shaping domestic life. Each of the five framed works is now kept by one of the four siblings, dispersing fragments of a shared past.

2024
Vintage wallpaper and bell switch mounted on board
Edition of 4 + AP
Each: 21 x 21 x 1 cm



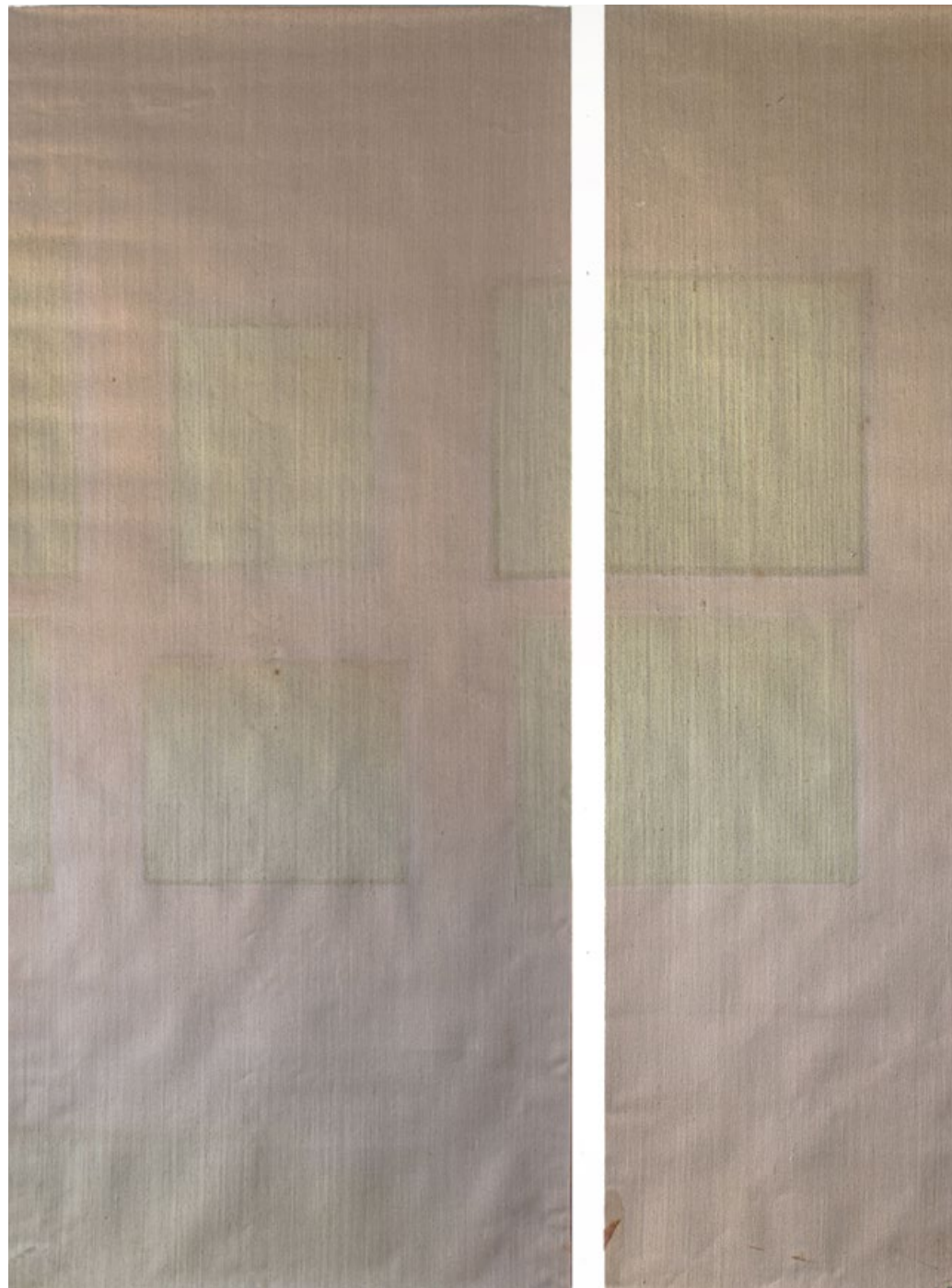


in casa non si corre!

Disfare il tempo
[Undoing time]

These wallpapers were collected by the artist from his grandparents' house. They bear the imprints of artworks and photographs that had hung there for over fifty years. After the grandparents passed away, the house, as often happens, had to be dismantled, like a stage slowly taken apart once the actors have left. Disfare il tempo reflects not only on what has been but also on what remains and what will follow. The wallpapers hang loosely on the wall, placed side by side yet incomplete, retaining traces while revealing absence. In continuity with the artist's previous reflections on walls and borders in a political sense, this work shifts toward a more intimate terrain, where separation and division are experienced within the space of memory.

2024
Four textile wallpapers with frame imprints.
Each: 110 x 260 cm





2024 - 2028 (Taipei)

The title refers to a period that several analysts identify as a potential window for a Chinese invasion of Taiwan, a timeframe that coincides with the current U.S. administration and is often described as carrying an elevated risk of military escalation. The work consists of three wall clocks, each bearing the inscription "Taipei." Their faces are progressively covered with semi-transparent coloured vinyl derived from the Chinese flag. As the colour intensifies, it gradually obscures the dial until the clock becomes fully unreadable. Time continues to move, but its measurement is increasingly concealed. The work materializes the idea of a suspended interval marked by mounting pressure, where the possibility of invasion is not hypothetical but actively contemplated within contemporary strategic discourse.

2024

Three custom wall clocks with semi-transparent coloured vinyl
Each: 25 x 25 x 5 cm





La divisa militare di mio padre è ancora buona

[My dad's military uniform is still good]

Times are changing, and the prospect of war no longer feels distant from Europe or its periphery. The ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, Palestine and the growing tension around Taiwan signal a broader reconfiguration of global power and the erosion of long-standing assumptions about Western stability. What once appeared exceptional now unfolds with unsettling regularity. *La divisa militare di mio padre è ancora buona* translates this geopolitical atmosphere into a domestic image. The uniform, carefully arranged on a valet stand with its hat and boots, is presented not as a relic but as something still functional. The title implies readiness rather than commemoration, suggesting that what belonged to a previous generation may once again become operative. The work reflects on the normalization of militarisation during periods of crisis. It gestures toward the possibility that discipline, hierarchy and the logic of the army could re-enter everyday life. The uniform stands between inheritance and reactivation, between private memory and a horizon of renewed conflict.

2023

Military uniform on valet stand, with hat and black leather boots
stand: 120 x 35 cm





La divisa militare di mio padre è ancora buona

[My dad's military uniform is still good]

This work consists of sixteen digital photographs documenting a staged performance based on *La divisa militare di mio padre è ancora buona*. The military garments previously displayed on a stand are here worn by the artist, who attempts to dress himself as if preparing for deployment. Suspended between irony and unease, the action stages a rehearsal for a conflict that has not yet arrived but feels increasingly conceivable. A clock running backwards appears within the sequence, suggesting not only the illusion of control over time but the anxiety of regression. The gesture of getting ready becomes both absurd and serious: an attempt to inhabit an inherited uniform while confronting the possibility that history may not move forward, but return.

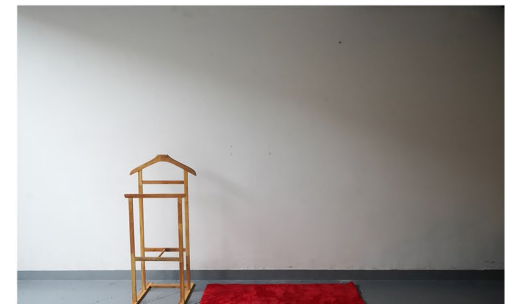
2023

Set of 16 digital prints on glossy paper

Each: 20 x 30 cm

Shooting by Daniele Notaristefano





Chiaro come l'acqua [Clear as water]

The work addresses the inevitable intersection of Mediterranean cultures, and more specifically the relationship between European and Moroccan identities. Read from left to right, according to Western convention, the sequence of banners suggests the gradual transformation of the Moroccan flag into that of the European Union. Read from right to left, following the direction of Arabic script, the process appears reversed, as the European flag dissolves into the Moroccan one. Through this double reading, the work stages a shifting field of political and cultural meaning. The glossy materials evoke the fluidity and transparency of water, proposing transformation and hybridization between geographically proximate yet historically and politically distant realities. The flag, as a symbol of sovereignty and national identity, is reconfigured and placed in a state of transition. The work was produced during a residency at Fondazione Ducci in Fez, in collaboration with seamstress Fatima Zahra El Idrissi and artisan Ghazi Filali Driss.

2022

Set of six velvet banners in different colours, hand-embroidered with silk thread; six rounded iron rods; twelve gold-plated finials.
Each: 80 x 120 cm







Frammenti di indipendenza

[Fragments of independence]

The work is inspired by the typical format of souvenirs' exhibitors and displays present almost everywhere in Fez and characterized by red velvet upholstery. Small nails fix 5 casts made with graphite which retrace the engravings of the Moroccan Manifesto of Independence at Place Batha. The work looks at the Manifesto as a crucial document not only for the past construction of Moroccan independence but for its present implementation. The presentation in fragments suggests the need to activate processes of political construction that are not based solely on the legacy of the nation's founding fathers.

2022

Set of 5 graphite casts mounted on two boards covered in velvet and with iron frames

I. 41 x 41 cm

II. 31 x 100 cm



أحمد الشرفاوي
أحمد النجدي
المسالي مكي

من
نكاح من
تعر بها
قدرها

وحدة
يات داخل
ها مبادي
لاد الأسلا

الاجزاء تشعر بما لها من الحقوق وما عليها من واجبات داخل البلاد وخارجها تحت و
وتقدّر حق قدرها الحريات الديمقراطية التي يوافق جوهرها مبادئ ديننا الحنيف والتي
نظام الحكم بالبلاد الإسلامية الشقيقة

يقرر ما يأتي

بما يرجع للسياسة العامة. **أولاً** : أن يطالب باستقلال المغرب
المفدى سيدنا محمد بن يوسف نصره الله وأيده
بما الأمر الاعتراف بهذا الاستقلال وضمانه،
مقشروعة. **ثالثاً** : أن يطلب انضمام المغرب
بما يرجع للسياسة الداخلية. **رابعاً** : أن يلتزم
غرب في داخله ويكيل لنظرة السيد أحمد
بة في الشرق تحفظ فيه حقوق سائر عناصر المغرب

الك

Le defi

[La sfida / The Challenge]

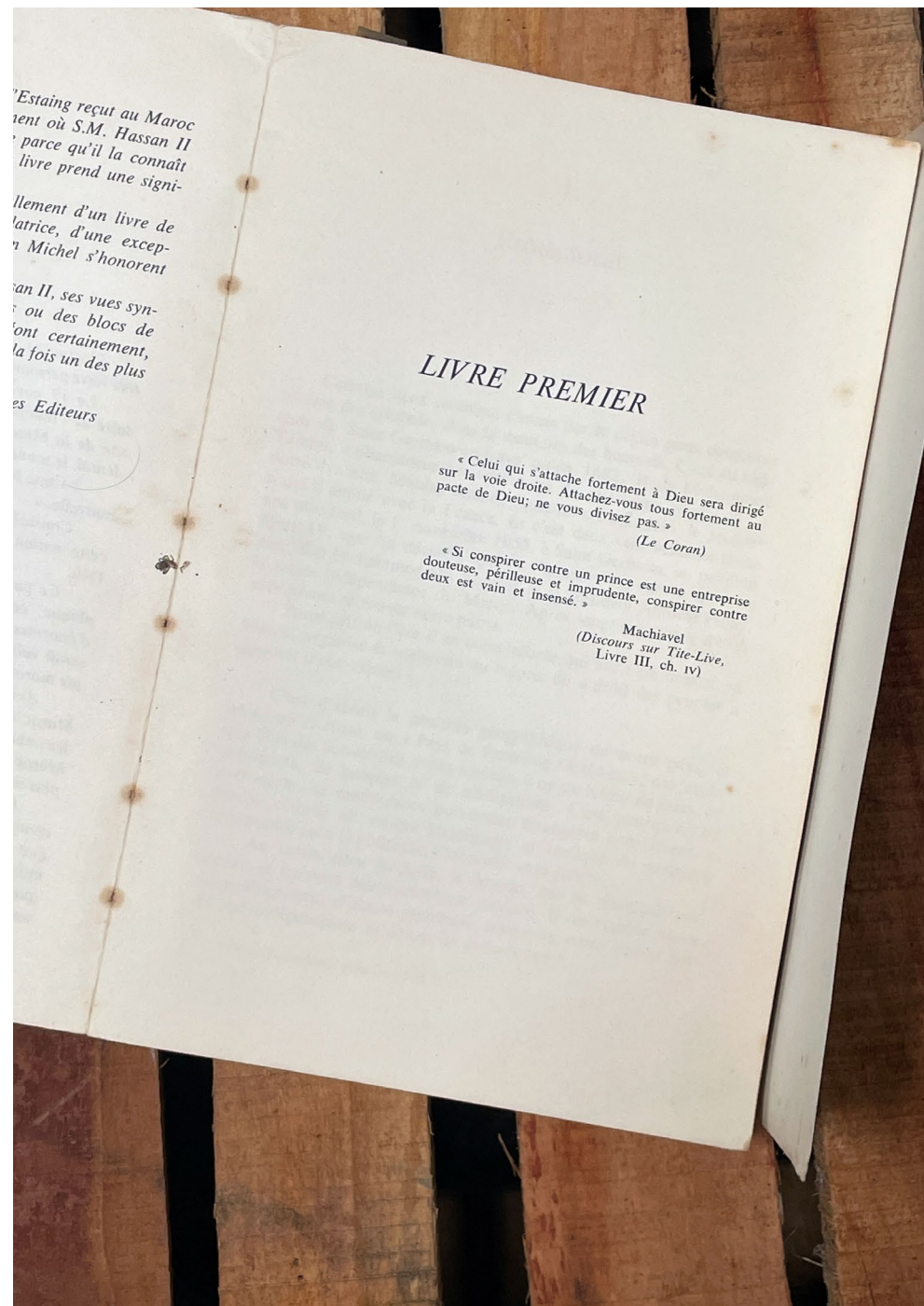
The diaries of King Hassan II offer a personal account of the consolidation of Moroccan national unity following the reign of his father. Framed by quotations from the Qur'an and Machiavelli's *The Prince*, the publication affirms a symbolic alignment between king, faith and people. The publisher's introduction, also visible, explicitly references the monarch's Eurafrican vision. The title, "The Challenge," evokes the ambition of strengthening cohesion and guiding the nation toward progress and improved living conditions. The work juxtaposes this official narrative with a different material register. The book is supported by heavy wooden fruit crates purchased at a market in Fez. Their rough, utilitarian presence introduces a contrast between ideological projection and everyday reality, grounding the rhetoric of unity and development within the tangible conditions of contemporary Morocco.

2022

Three wooden fruit crates and a copy of King Hassan II's diaries, opened to the introductory quotations and final publisher's remarks

65 x 70 cm





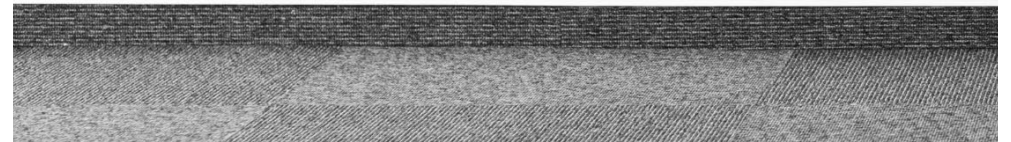
29/06/2022 (Manifesto)

The work consists of a vinyl wall text quoting a statement released by then Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi on 29/06/2022, hours after the trilateral memorandum signed in Madrid between Turkey, Sweden and Finland. The agreement enabled the two Nordic countries to join NATO in exchange for security concessions to Turkey. These included commitments to support extradition requests related to members of the PKK (Kurdish Workers' Party), the lifting of arms export restrictions imposed on Turkey since its 2019 military intervention in northern Syria, and the withdrawal of political and material support for the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union (PYD) and the People's Protection Units (YPG), both central actors in the anti-ISIS coalition. Tacitly accepted by the other NATO states, the memorandum marked a significant realignment within the alliance. By isolating Draghi's words, the work crystallizes this moment of strategic negotiation from an Italian standpoint. The title of the piece records the date of both the agreement and the statement, continuing the artist's exploration of the manifesto form as a site of critical tension within contemporary political crisis.

2022
Black self-adhesive wall vinyl
100 x 500 cm

GIORNALISTA: "L'INGRESSO DI SVEZIA E FINLANDIA NELLA NATO VALE LA CONSE
MARIO DRAGHI: "[...] PERÒ...ATTENZIONE! SICCOME È UN PUNTO MOLTO II
Rojnameger: "Gelo ketina Swêd û Finlandiyayê ya NATO'yê bêj,
Mario Draghi: "[...] lê... bişyar be! ji ber ku eu

“SOTAMAIHO AH OJ OZSETZ IEL EMOC NAGOGAN COME IEL STESSO LO HA CHIAMATO?”
ENE CHE QUESTA DOMANDA LA FACCIATE ALLA SVEZIA E ALLA FINLANDIA.”
“ijij DAİŞ’ê kînin, ji dîktator Erdogan re weke ku we jê re got.”
“ê ku bûn ên pîrê ji Swêd û Finlandiyayê dikin.”



GIORNALISTA: "L'INGRESSO DI SVEZIA E FINLANDIA NELLA NATO VALE LA CONSEGNA DEI CURDI, CHE CI HANNO AIUTATO A COMBATTERE L'ISIS, AL DITTATORE ERDOGAN COME LEI STESSO LO HA CHIAMATO?"

MARIO DRAGHI: "[...] PERÒ...ATTENZIONE! SICCOME È UN PUNTO MOLTO IMPORTANTE, QUESTO CHE LEI HA TOCCATO, È BENE CHE QUESTA DOMANDA LA FACCIATE ALLA SVEZIA E ALLA FINLANDIA."

Rojnameger: "Gelo ketina Swêd û Finlandiyayê ya NATO'yê bêjayî teslim kirina Kurdên, ku alikariya me li şerê li dijî DAÎŞ'ê kirin, ji diktator Erdogan re weke ku we jê re got?"

Mario Draghi: "[...] lê... bişyar bel ji ber ku ew xalek pir girîng e, tiştê ku we dest pê kiriye, baş e ku hûn wê pirsê ji Swêd û Finlandiyayê bikin."

GIORNALISTA: "L'INGRESSO DI SVEZIA E FINLANDIA NELLA NATO VALE LA CONSEGNA DEI CURDI, CHE CI HANNO AIUTATO A COMBATTERE L'ISIS, AL DITTATORE ERDOGAN COME LEI STESSO LO HA CHIAMATO?"

MARIO DRAGHI: "[...] PERÒ...ATTENZIONE! SICCOME È UN PUNTO MOLTO IMPORTANTE, QUESTO CHE LEI HA TOCCATO, È BENE CHE QUESTA DOMANDA LA FACCIATE ALLA SVEZIA E ALLA FINLANDIA."

Rojnameger: "Gelo ketina Swêd û Finlandiyayê ya NATO'yê bêjayî teslim kirina Kurdên, ku alikariya me li şerê li dijî DAÎŞ'ê kirin, ji diktator Erdogan re weke ku we jê re got?"

Mario Draghi: "[...] lê... bişyar bel ji ber ku ew xalek pir girîng e, tiştê ku we dest pê kiriye, baş e ku hûn wê pirsê ji Swêd û Finlandiyayê bikin."

C'era una volta...

[Once upon a time...]

The work was produced during the 2022 edition of A *Cielo Aperto* residency in Latronico, Italy, which that year assigned each participating artist to a local family in the town. It reflects on the transmission of fairy tales and the cultivation of imagination in an increasingly pragmatic world. Rooted in the history of the Gigante-Ponzio family, the project draws inspiration from grandma Ada, who devoted her life to stories, magic and fantastic creatures, leaving a lasting imprint across generations. Knobs and latches are discreetly distributed and concealed among the trees of the family's large garden, where three generations still live together. These elements suggest the presence of hidden doors to alternative and imaginary worlds. The keys remain with the family, reinforcing the idea that access to these imagined thresholds depends on shared memory and trust rather than discovery alone.

2022

Eight knobs and eight latches installed on trees at Villa Rosa, Calda di Latronico; four permanent tattoos on the forearms of four family members.







In Varietate Concordia

Like mottos and flags, national anthems function as ideological devices, capable of musically consolidating a community and crystallizing a shared sense of belonging. Legally codified and protected, the anthem translates the project of the modern state into sound and verse. Its status differs from that of any other composition: it must be performed with solemnity and without interference, alone or, at most, alongside a foreign hymn as a sign of alliance. In contrast to this protocol, *In Varietate Concordia* brings together the texts and scores of the national anthems of the European Union's member states. Their simultaneous reading exposes the tensions between the cultural geographies they articulate and the transnational framework within which they now coexist. The Latin phrase that gives the work its title, the official motto of the European Union, invokes unity in diversity; yet the political and historical asymmetries among member states complicate that promise.

2022

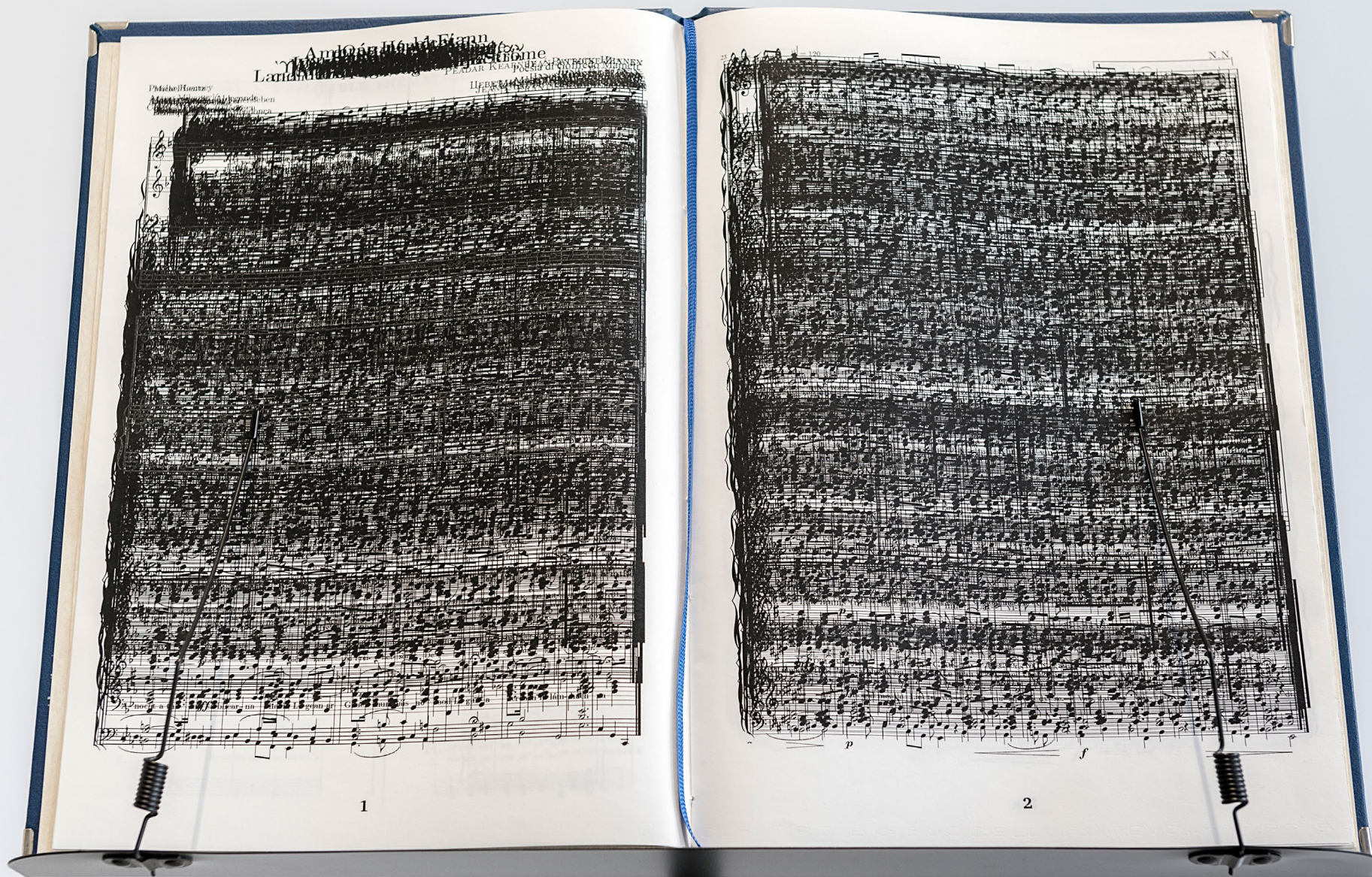
Bound score (A4 digital print and movable type) on music stand

145 x 50 cm

Sound bar with 12:20 min audio composition (loop)

86 x 5 x 5 cm







An die Freude [Ode to joy]

The "Ode to Joy" (An die Freude) was written in 1785 by Friedrich Schiller and later set to music by Ludwig van Beethoven in the final movement of his Ninth Symphony (1824). In 1972, Beethoven's melody was adopted as the "Anthem of Europe" by the Council of Europe and later by the European Union. Its adoption marked an international compromise. The music was separated from Schiller's text – considered insufficiently universal – and retained only in instrumental form. It was also made to coexist with the national anthems of member states, in line with the Union's motto, In Varietate Concordia (United in diversity). Unlike national anthems written to affirm territorial sovereignty, Beethoven's composition was not conceived for Europe but later chosen to represent it, replacing earlier proposals such as Noiret's L'Europe unie! (1948) and Hohenfeldt's An Europa (1953). This work, an die Freude, focuses on one of the poem's early lines, where humanity is described as "walking drunk with fire" toward the future. The bow remains intact but worn; the sentence, more than two centuries later, sounds less like celebration than warning.

2022
Cello bow with leather insert and movable type printed text
72 x 4 x 1 cm







Publication accompanying the show at Linea project, Lecce, 2022.

parlaménto

This photograph is taken from a video recording of a European Parliament session in February 2022. On that occasion, Bulgarian representative Angel Dzhambazki ended his speech in defense of a “Europe of Nations” with a gesture resembling a Roman salute. The politician later denied any intentional reference to fascist ideology. Whether deliberate or not, the gesture prompted an immediate and unequivocal public reaction. That response, in itself, calls for reflection – particularly in relation to the renewed concern over authoritarian shifts within the continent.

2022
Digital print from video still in a wooden frame
print: 6 x 6 cm
frame: 25 x 25 cm





Un posto al sole

[A place under the sun]

A Place Under the Sun is composed of three found frames, each different in size and shape, containing screen-printed outlines of Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia – the three African territories colonized by Italy under Fascism. At first glance, the works resemble abstract paintings; only on closer inspection do the borders of Italy's former colonies during the Second World War become visible. The title refers to the phrase Mussolini used to describe Italy's imperial ambition in Ethiopia: "a place under the sun." The work addresses the limited presence of a postcolonial perspective within Italian modern history. Many still consider the country neither a colonial nor a migratory nation. Yet, until the recent past, school textbooks used to describe the African colonies as "sandboxes," due to the supposed lacking of resources. This framing leaves out the violence and war crimes committed in Africa. The difficulty one may have in recognizing the outlines of the three countries reflects a broader difficulty in acknowledging such colonial past and its geographies.

2021

Set of three screenprint on burlap in vintage frames

I. 60 x 60 cm; II. 60 x 85 cm; III. 70 x 50 cm





Big statement on your father coming soon

On 11 October 2021, Eduardo Bolsonaro posted on Instagram a photograph of himself holding a printed copy of his own Wikipedia page, bearing a handwritten dedication and signature by Donald Trump. The inscription reads: "Eduardo, you are great. Big statement on your wonderful father will be coming soon. Best wishes, Donald Trump." The image is accompanied by a lengthy caption in which Bolsonaro praises the former U.S. president and denounces what he describes as the politically correct discrimination faced by both the Bolsonaro family and Trump. Eduardo Bolsonaro is one of the sons of Jair Bolsonaro, the far-right president of Brazil at the time. In 2018, he was re-elected for a second term as Federal Deputy, becoming the most voted lawmaker in Brazil's history, with 1.8 million votes.

2021

Digital print in a wooden frame

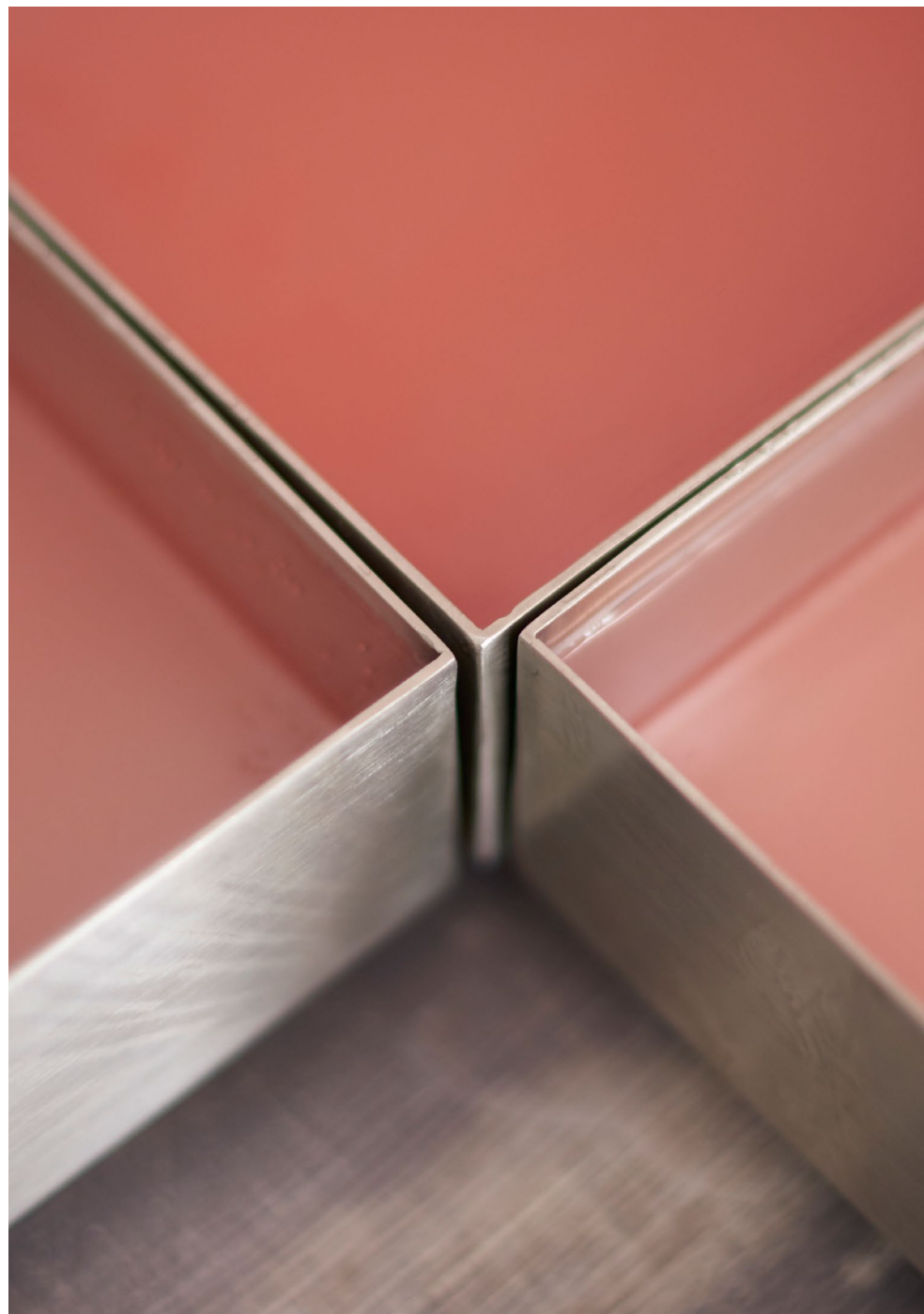
24 x 29 cm



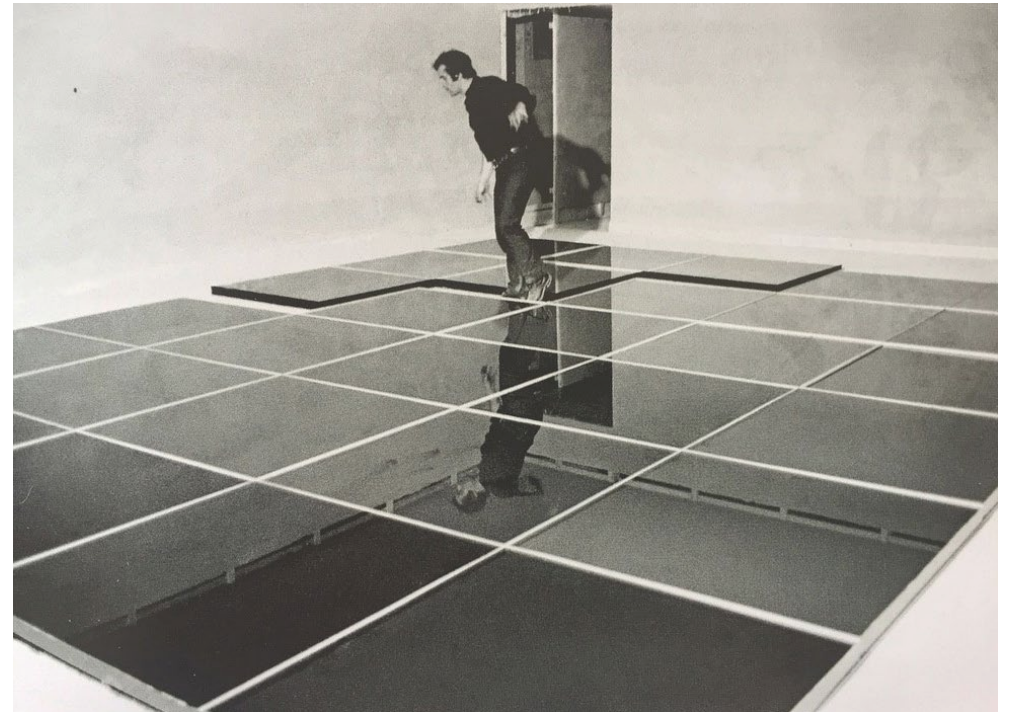
32 metri quadri di mare (Mediterraneo)
[32 square metres of (Mediterranean) sea]

In 1967, Pino Pascali presented 32 Square Meters of Sea circa, composed of thirty metal tanks filled with water and blue aniline. Part of his Natural Elements series, the work translated the sea into a modular, industrial structure, reducing a landscape to measured units. Aniline, as a chemical dye, oxidizes over time, gradually turning from blue to reddish-brown. 32 Square Meters of (Mediterranean) Sea takes this material transformation as its starting point. Twenty-seven stainless steel tanks – one for each EU member state – contain water with increasing concentrations of red aniline. The red is therefore not only symbolic but grounded in the chemical behavior of the dye itself, while also evoking the violence associated with migration across the Mediterranean. Installed against two walls, the tanks suggest both a statistical diagram and the restricted accessibility of maritime borders. Conceived for institutional contexts such as Italian Cultural Institutes, the work retains Pascali's title while exposing the gap between representation and reality. When exhibited in Tunis, it generated tensions with the Embassy over whether the meaning of the red dye should be publicly stated.

2021
Ministry of Culture - Cantica21 prize winner
27 inox steel tanks with red dye and water
Each: 7 x 100 x 100 cm
Overall: 27 square metres







left: making process
top: Pascali with his work

Border strategy

"For the first time in history, the European Union has its own uniformed service – the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps. Trained by the best and equipped with the latest that technology has to offer, Frontex border and coast guards are ready for challenges at the borders, helping to ensure the proper functioning of Europe's Schengen Area. This includes support in migration management, fighting cross-border crime and return activities, as well as supporting national authorities in making the crossing of the border safe and smooth for all travelers. They can work at the borders of EU Member States and currently support operations in countries such as Italy, Greece, Spain and Bulgaria." This statement appears on the Frontex website, where the Agency also claims to maintain a 24/7 Europe-wide view of border control and migration management. Notably, humanitarian assistance is not listed among its core tasks. The work responds with a simple gesture: a pair of inflatable swimming armbands branded with the Agency's logo.

2021

Screenprint on PVC kids swimming armrests in a custom cardboard box

Each: 22 x 14 x 14 cm

Edition of 27



7.5 ml of Mediterranean sea

With a temporally paradoxical premise – the geological drift of Africa toward Europe – this small box, accompanied by instructions, offers its future owner the chance to appropriate 7.5 millilitres of water collected from a Mediterranean Sea imagined as destined to disappear. The enclosed leaflet provides the exact coordinates of the shoreline where the sample was taken and states:

"(Sealed for strictly personal use) Sample collected on the 23 December 2020, after learning the worrying news that Africa is approaching Europe at the speed of 2 cm per year, and that such continental drift will soon bring to the disappearance of the Sea that separates them."

Italy, 2021
Marine water in a sealed bottle,
rounded box and a leaflet
Overall: 10 x 6 cm



A short story in three parts

A short story in three parts combines photographs and newspaper clippings from the first half of the twentieth century. The framed materials recount the life of Cyril Trigger and his family, who lived and travelled across Asia under British colonial privilege. Discovered at a flea market in London, the archive reveals a casual, normalized racism—visible not only in the handwritten notes on the photographs but also in the language of the press, where Sri Lanka is still referred to as Ceylon. Through subtle textual insertions, the work draws a connection to the present: many products from Sri Lanka continue to be marketed under the name "Ceylon." The result is a short circuit between the formal end of colonial rule and the persistence of colonial branding strategies designed to appeal to Western consumers.

2019/2020

Set of four frames containing two vintage photographs, two newspaper cut-outs, tape and handwritten text in marker on transparent acetate sheets.
Each: 45 x 30 cm





A short story, in three parts.



LOCATIONS ON THE PLAIN: "Rivers at Kigoma, 25 miles from Kigoma, Ceylon" March 1916

In 1958 Cyril Figgis, his wife and youngest daughter, Pamela, had just returned to Nairobi after over 10 years of travelling - from Trieste to Ceylon, and Singapore.

1.



IN 2003 WAS FORMED THE GRAND AD-SCHEME - 5th FOLIO IN THE COUNTRY.

2.



APPENDIX

- I. I found Figgis' family album - together with other family, pictures and hand-written notes - in Dargford's vintage market in 2008.
- II. The portuguese name, CIGUEIRA, was adopted in English, as CIGUERA and used for, after 1962, when the country gained independence.
- III. Remained SP (CIGUEIRA) in 1972, despite still identify current public institutions (by Cigoma Bone) and beside the national export abroad.

3.

Affiches

(Erdogan after Allen Jones/National flag/Let me, let me)

Titled *Erdogan After Allen Jones, National Flag, and Let Me, Let Me*, these collages draw on the blunt visual language of urban advertising and propaganda posters to reflect on the public image of President Erdogan in Turkey. The works address the figure of the “sultan” in relation to personal freedom and the political tensions surrounding women’s rights. The series was removed from the exhibition at the Italian Embassy in Ankara due to concerns over possible political repercussions.

2019

Set of 3 mixed media collages with oil sticks mounted on wood

I: 35 x 20 cm; II: 20 x 8 cm; III: 10 x 10 cm



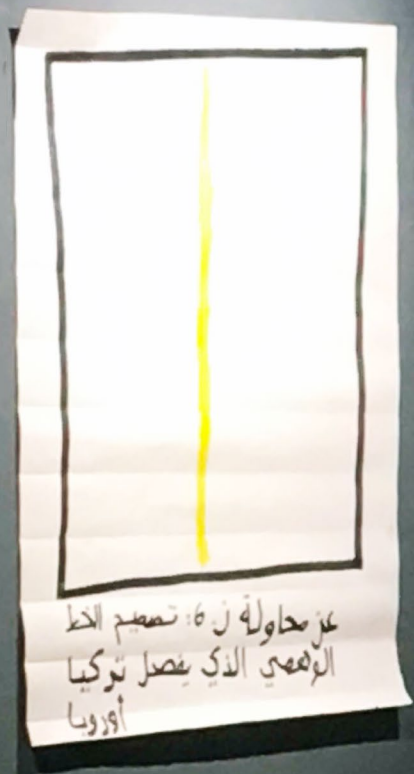


Can you sea?

The work was developed over a residency in Turkey, organised by Guler Sanat gallery in collaboration with the Italian Embassy on the occasion of the 2019 Vivere all'Italiana programme. It consists of an artist-wallpaper where the negative outline of the Mediterranean Sea is ill-concealed as an abstract decorative pattern.

2019
Self-adhesive custom-designed wallpaper
Variable dimensions

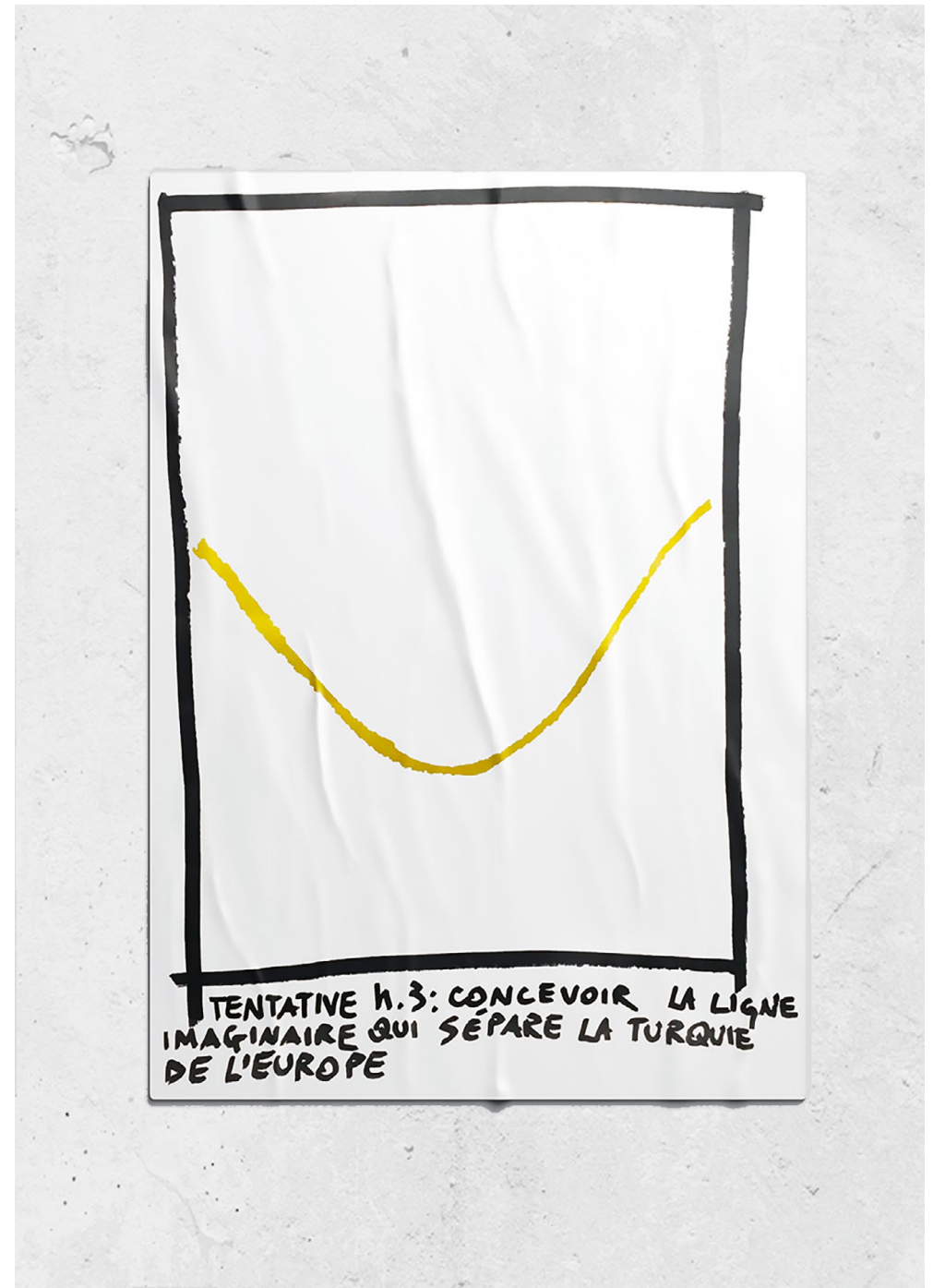




Tentativo [Attempt]

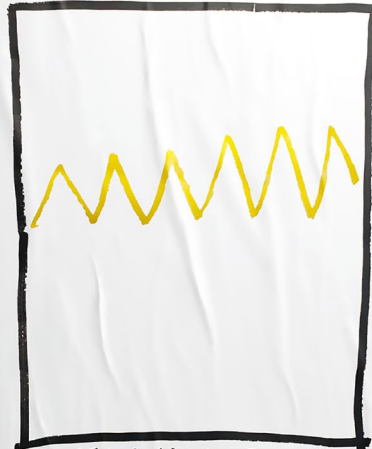
This set of six posters playfully explores the shifting outlines a single political and geographical border can assume when filtered through different languages and cultural perspectives. The work brings together an ongoing research on borders and their political implications with an investigation into textual and linguistic difference, highlighting how language itself reshapes the way space can be imagined.

2019
Set of 6 marker and oil sticks on newsprint
Each: 61 x 40 cm





TENTATIVO N°1: DISEGNARE LA LINEA
IMAGINARIA CHE SEPARA LA TURCHIA
DALL'EUROPA



ATTEMPT N°2: DRAWING THE IMAGINARY
LINE THAT SEPARATES TURKEY FROM
EUROPE



TENTATIVE N°3: CONCEVOIR LA LIGNE
IMAGINAIRE QUI SEPARÉ LA TURQUIE
DE L'EUROPE



INTENTO N°4: DISEÑE LA LINEA
IMAGINARIA QUE SEPARA TURQUIA
DE EUROPA



DENEME N°5: TÜRKİYE VE AVRUPAYI
AYIRAN HAYALI SINIR HATTI ÇİZİMİ



عن محاولة ن°6: تصحيح الخط
الوهمي الذي يفصل تركيا
أوروبا

Ballot box (intercepted)

Produced in Ankara in 2019, the work consists of a found wooden ballot box, complete with black and white balls for a simple yes/no vote. The box was packed using standard artwork shipping materials, carefully labeled, and sent abroad – only to be stopped at customs and intercepted. In the context of recent Turkish elections, often marked by allegations and suspicions of irregularities, the piece reflects on the fragility of democratic procedures. Presented sealed in its packaging, the ballot box is rendered unusable: the possibility of casting a vote is materially denied. A device meant to enable participation becomes an obstructed object, suspended between circulation and control.

2019

Wooden ballot box, plastic balls, adhesive tape, and yellow packing material
32 x 25 x 10 cm





You need class (for a revolution)

According to Marx, revolution depends on class conflict and the dismantling of bourgeois privilege. This small vintage drawing, found at a flea market in London, depicts a stereotypical domestic scene within a middle-class family. The juxtaposed text introduces a short circuit around the notion of class, exposing how it is often reduced to a question of manners or lifestyle rather than understood as a structural condition shaped by power and economic relations.

2019
Oil and charcoal on plastic and tracing paper
23 x 20 cm



2018 (manifesto)

2018 (manifesto) is an action-based project that involved delivering a found boat to the Italian Cultural Institute in London. The installation featured a looped audio track of the bell used to open and suspend sessions in the Italian Parliament, alongside printed translations of the speech delivered by Matteo Salvini to the Senate during the "Nave Aquarius" case. The speech was transcribed in theatrical form and stripped of the speaker's name. Retitled 2018 (manifesto), the text shifts register and context, unsettling the reader's perception of its original intent. In doing so, the work questions what an artistic – and political – manifesto might look like today.

2018

Found boat, audio loop of the Italian Parliament session bell, printed translations of a Senate speech transcribed in theatrical format

[link](#)



Charming, likeable and delightful

Charming, Likeable and Delightful – also the title of a Dada poem by Tristan Tzara – was produced for a show at Incheon Art Platform, Seoul. Borrowing the inexpensive visual language of Korean street advertising, the banner promotes free artist studios in Pyongyang, North Korea. In reality, South Koreans are forbidden from entering the country, and artistic production in the North is strictly controlled by the state. The work stages an impossible offer, using humor and exaggeration to gesture toward a bridge across the divided Korean peninsula. The title reinforces this intention, echoing the anarchic spirit of Tzara's poetry.

2018
Digital print on vinyl banner
80 x 150 cm



Las Vegas

The installation, presented at the Stanley Picker Gallery, Kingston upon Thames, London, draws on an advertisement for Las Vegas encountered in the London Underground, accompanied by the slogan: "You know why you come here." Removed from its original context, the sentence shifts from promotional certainty to open provocation, questioning not only the motivations that bring viewers in front of the work, but more broadly the impulses and narratives that shape our movements and decisions.

2017

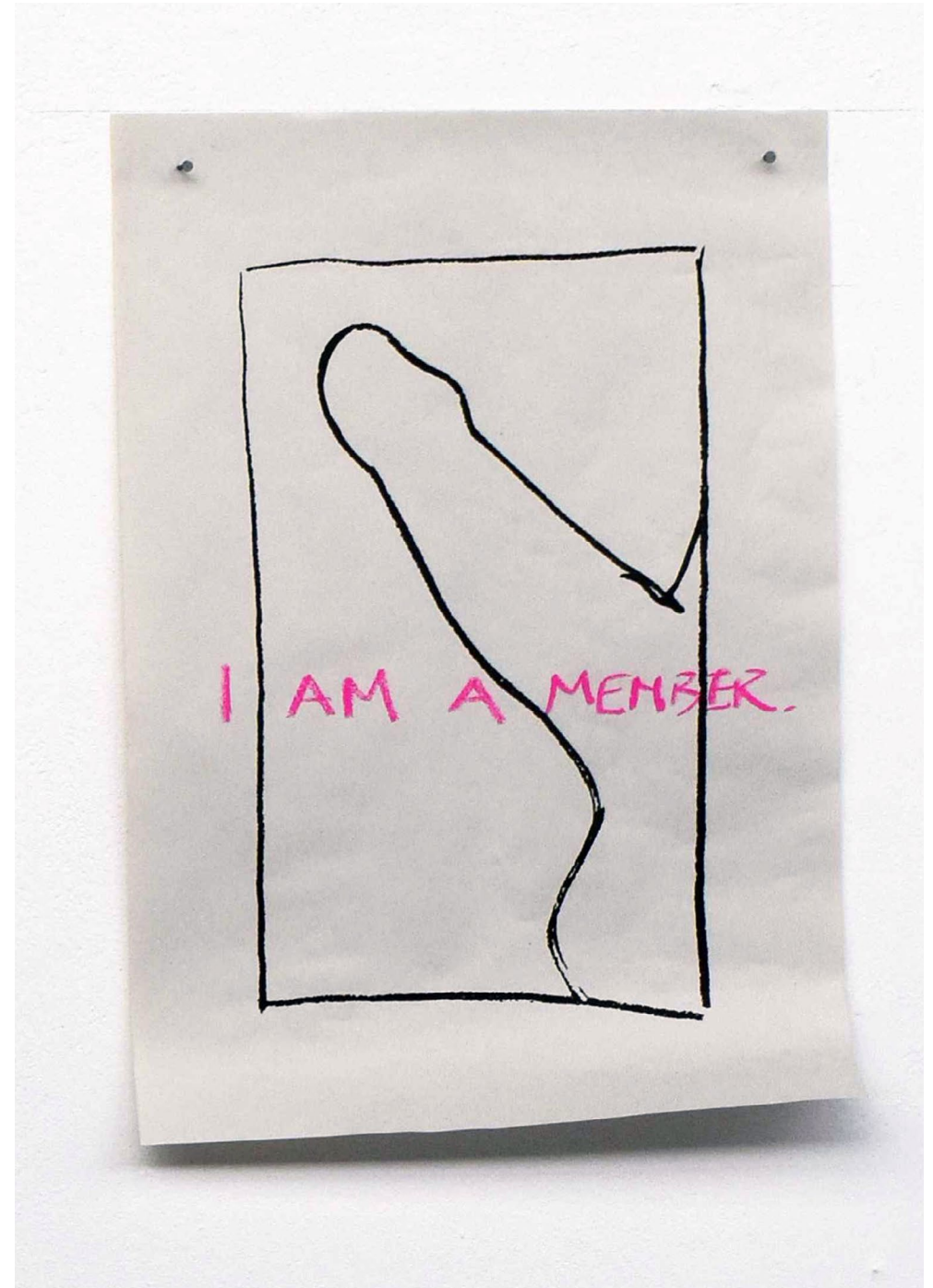
Yellow vinyl lettering on perspex, aluminium wires and fixings
perspex and vinyl: 33 x 300 x 1.5 cm each



I am a member

This print is inspired by the etymological root of the word "member", which refers to the male phallus. Central to the activities and funding strategies of many cultural institutions and museums (eg. extract from Tate London website below), the idea of the membership implies both dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. The term also bears strong social and gender-related contradictions inherent to its masculine implications.

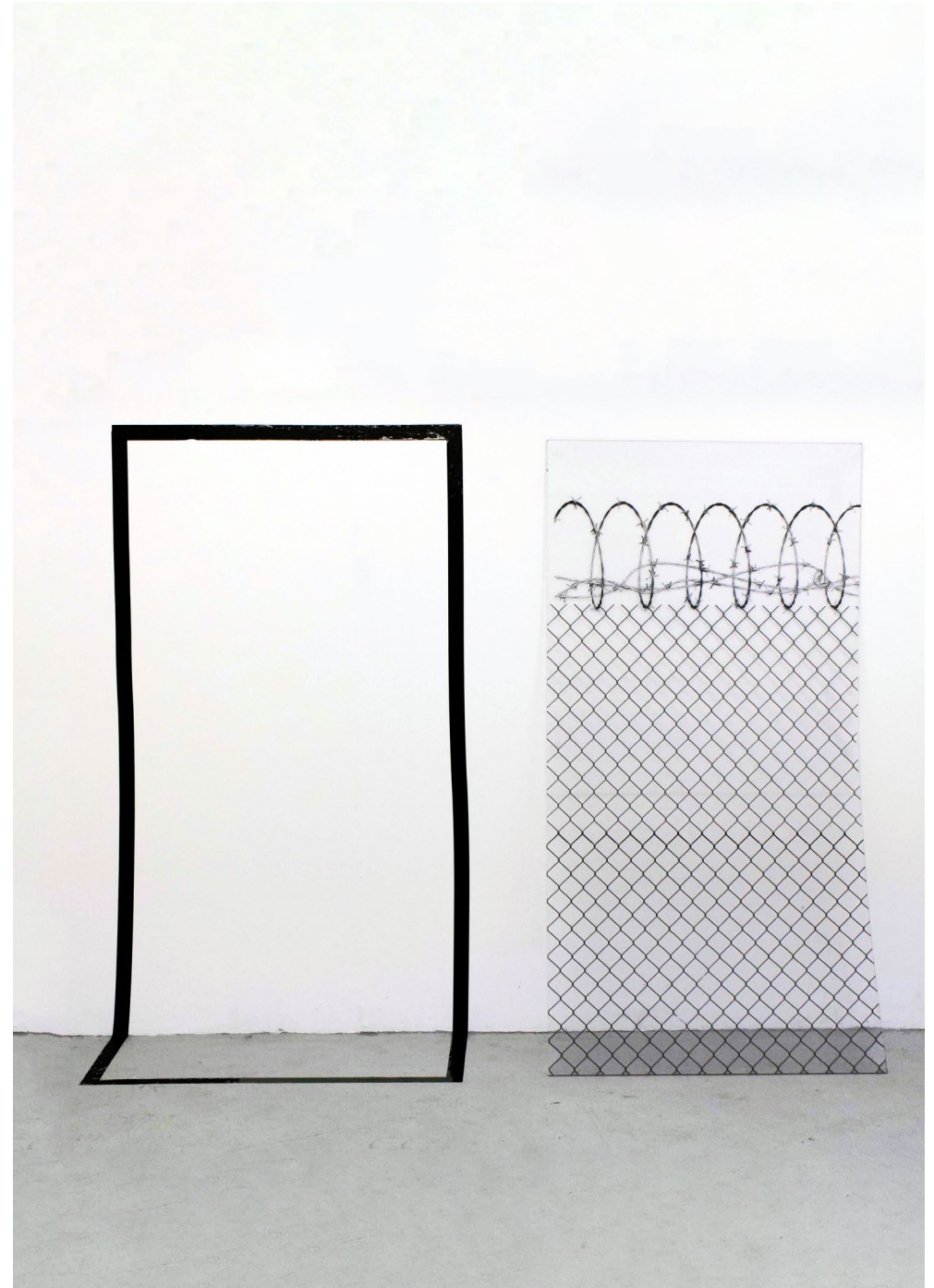
2017
Riso print on newsprint
62 x 42 cm

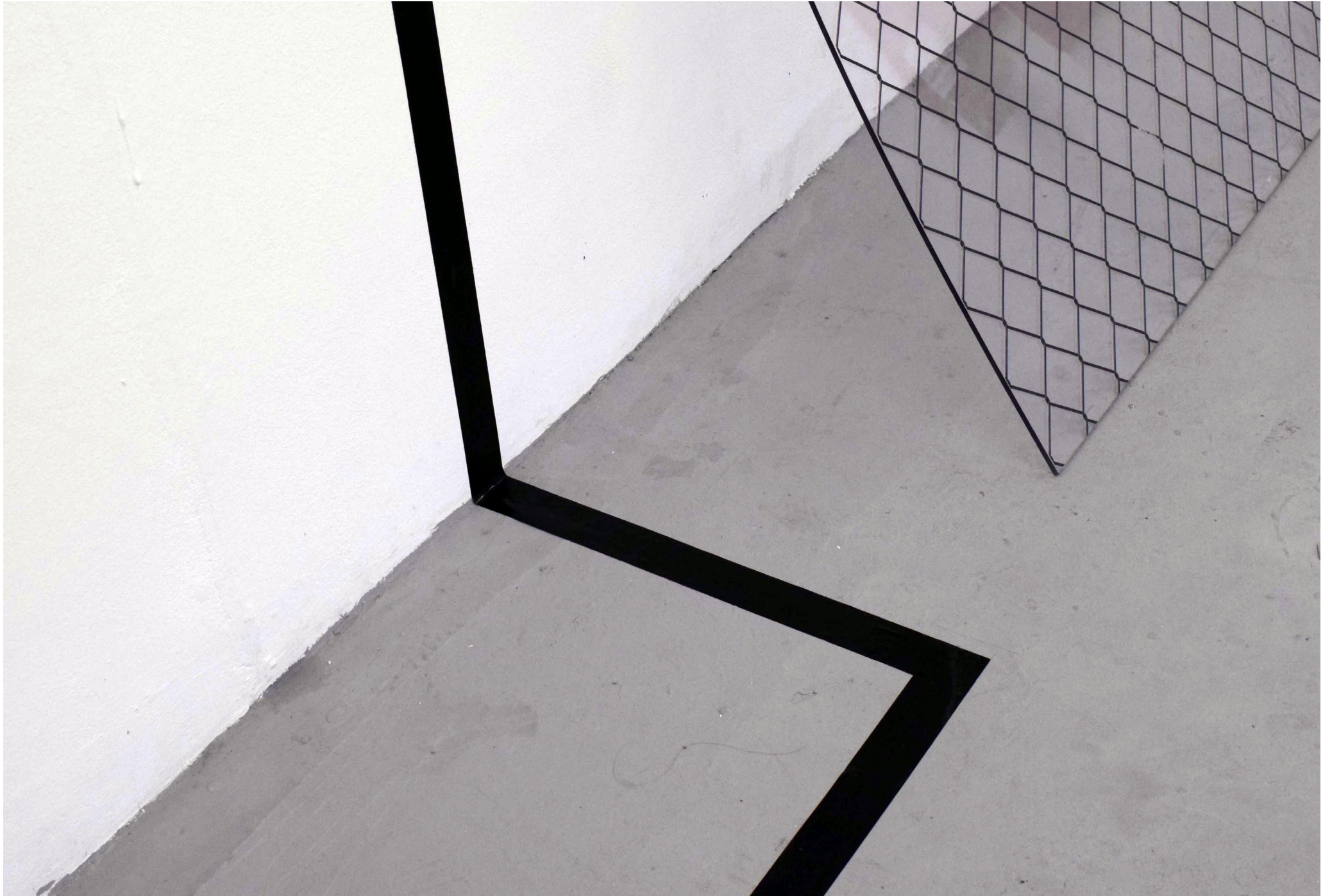


On the concept of raising a wall

This sculpture explores what a “wall” might signify today, at a time when the brutal and minimalist aesthetics of fences and border barriers have come to dominate the political and social meaning of the term. The work consists of a detailed rendering of a fence printed on plexiglass, which bends outward from the wall it rests against. Its curvature is emphasized by a rigid vinyl outline whose geometry can also be read as an opening or passage, subtly destabilizing the boundary it appears to assert.

2017
Screenprint on perspex, vinyl tape
180 x 100 x 0.5 cm





London (behind the walls)

This photographic series was produced and printed in postcard format a few months before the Brexit referendum. It portrays some of London's most recognizable landmarks as seen from behind nearby walls – sometimes imposing and obstructive, sometimes barely perceptible. The difference is often a matter of perspective. The choice of the postcard format introduces a further tension: while postcards conventionally suggest proximity, memory, and connection, the images themselves emphasize distance and separation.

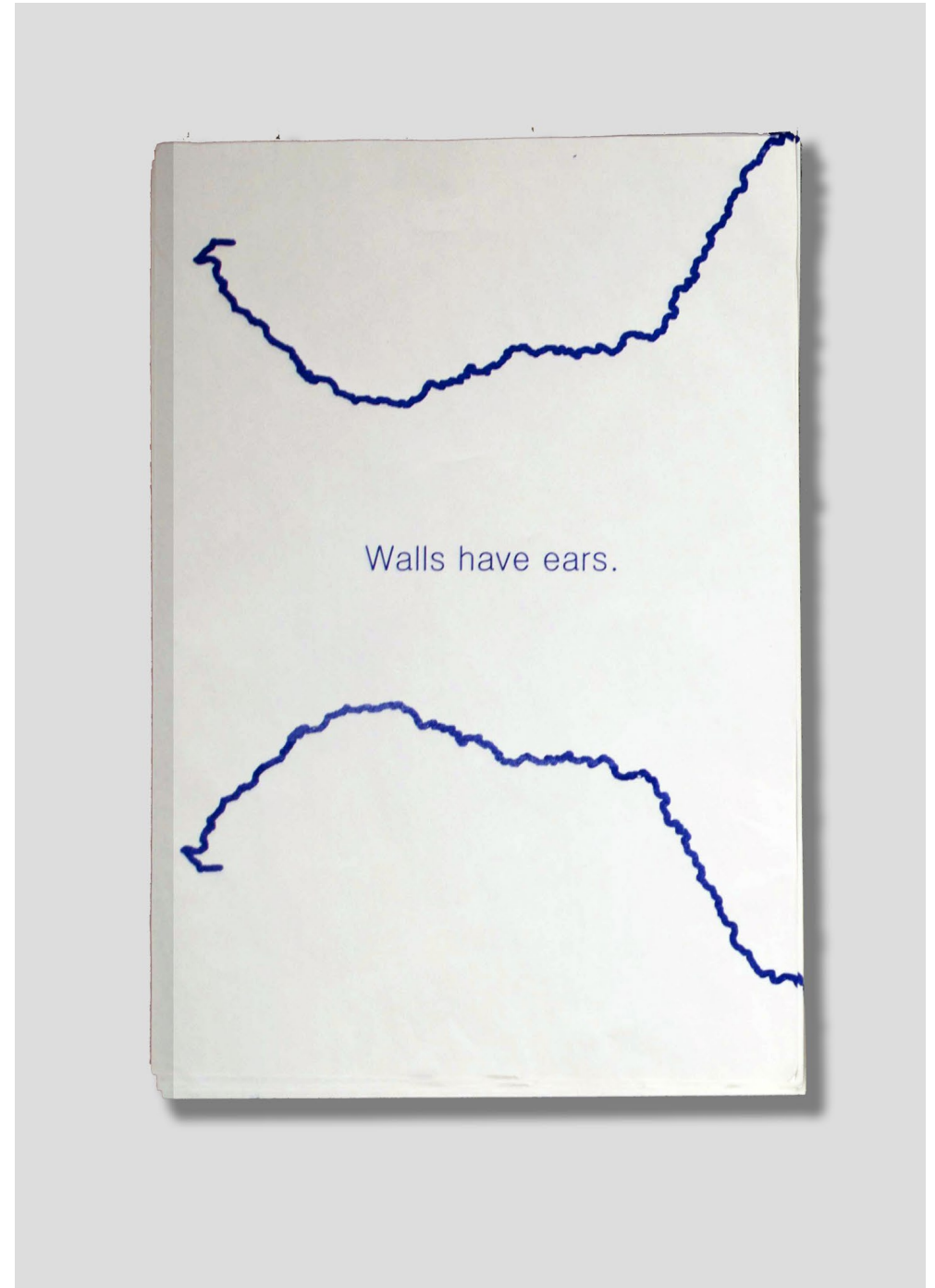
2016
Set of 5 digital prints on card
Each: 17 x 12 cm



A falnak is fule van
[Walls have ears]

The phrase “walls have ears” – in its various translations – has long appeared in war posters and propaganda leaflets, warning against indiscretion and the threat of spies. Developed during a residency in Budapest and presented at Labor Gallery, the posters trace the outlines of the borders of Hungary and Turkey, two countries where reinforced border controls and fences against migrants have been constructed over the years. Both occupy pivotal geopolitical positions in relation to migration routes toward Europe, turning the warning into a contemporary reflection on surveillance, control, and the policing of movement.

2016
Set of 3 riso on newsprint
Each: 60 x 40 cm





The wallies

[I muretti]

The Wallies is a set of four movable wooden structures, each equipped with small wheels and handles that allow them to be transported. Shaped like cut-outs of domestic interiors, they adopt a familiar, almost comforting appearance that contrasts with the political tensions they address. The works were conceived in Budapest in 2016, during the Hungarian referendum against EU migrant quotas and the construction of the kilometer-long fence along the Serbian border. Developed during a residency organized by Kemal Orta at the Budapest Academy of Fine Arts' Labor Gallery, the project reflects on the rhetoric surrounding borders and national identity. The largest Wallie was symbolically relocated and left in front of the Hungarian National Museum. On the reverse side, the structures carry texts in different languages echoing the tone of Viktor Orbán's government manifesto, including the question: "Did you know that the Paris terrorist attacks were committed by migrants?"

2016

Wood, wallpaper, trolley's wheels and mixed media

120/180/210/100 x 100 x 50 cm

[link](#)







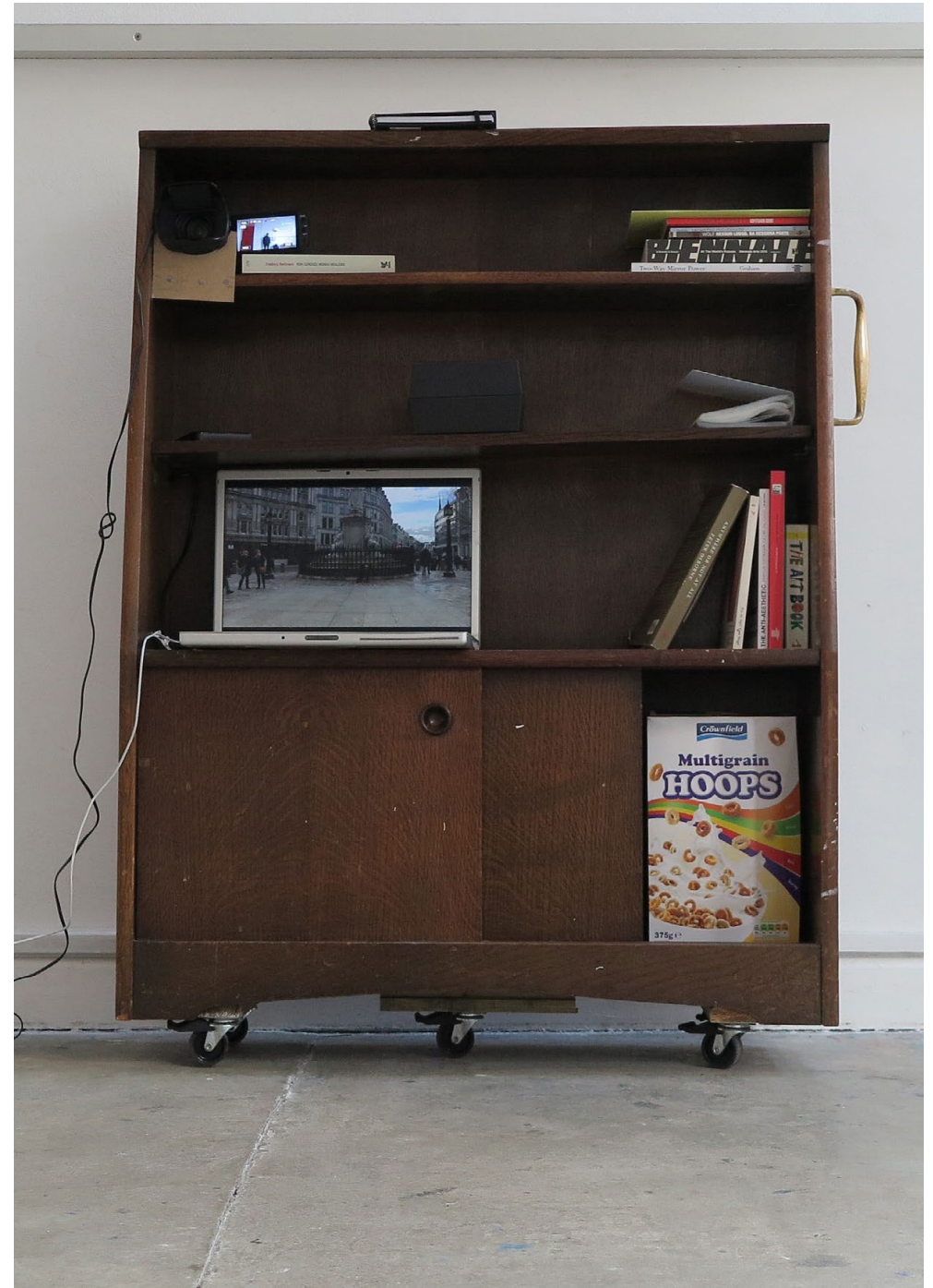
Andy (from the studio to the Tate)

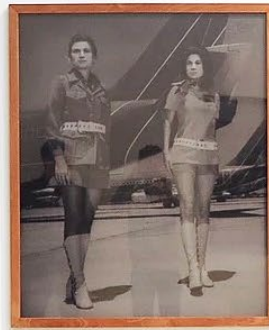
Andy is a mobile sculpture conceived as a device to test the threshold at which an object ceases to be recognized as an artwork. I transported Andy from my studio in Kingston to Tate Modern in London, where it was twice asked to leave.

2016

Wheeled cabinet, handle, camera, PC, chargers, art theory books and cereals
120 x 90 x 18 cm

[link](#)





Calais (flag)

The sculpture transfers the stamp of the French border at Calais onto a flag made from Western men's suit fabric and bicycle components. Produced at the height of the migrant crisis, during the existence of the so-called "Jungle" camp, the work proposes an imaginary flag for a community excluded yet situated at the threshold between European states. The bicycle elements allude to the possibility of autonomous, low-cost movement, evoking mobility as both necessity and aspiration.

2016
Screen print on men's suit fabric and found bicycle parts
Print: 187 x 120 cm; rod: 140 x 15 cm



Here and there

Living sculpture exploring the paradox of incommunicability between individuals who share the same conditions yet remain unable to truly connect, presented at the Combat Prize, Livorno, 2015.

2015
Fish tank, five fish bowls, water and five gold fish
50 x 120 x 50 cm





www.nicolaguastamacchia.com
nicolaguastamacchia@gmail.com
Corso Trieste 11, 70126, Bari, Italy