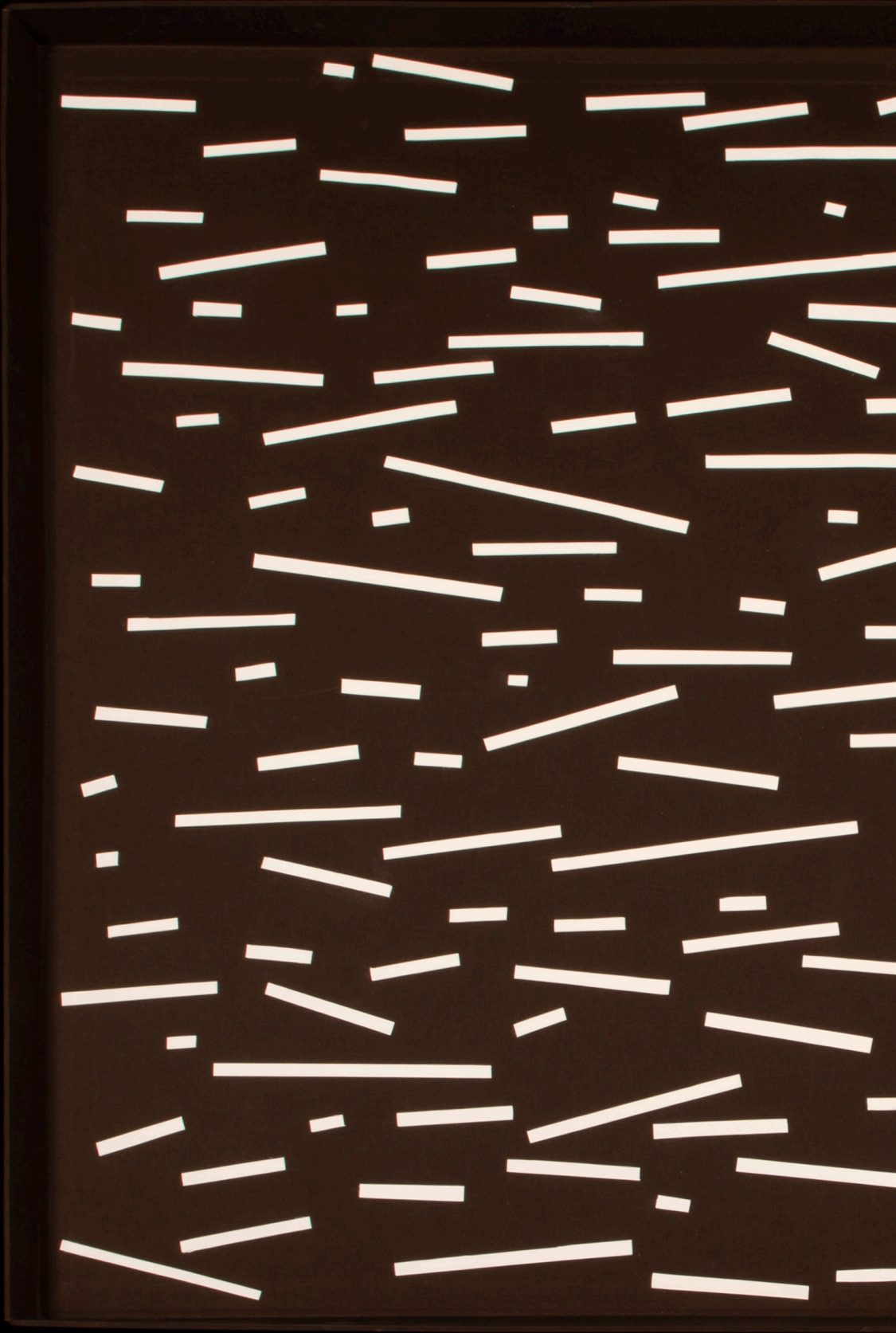


...the two

Andrés Michelena



...the two

Andrés Michelena

February 15th, 2020 - April 25th, 2020

Piero Atchugarry Gallery



...the two

Since the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle are not always complete from the start, you have to turn to patience in order to assume that “There is a time for everything”; and it is then that we have to wait until time matures both the circumstances and the person who intends to put the pieces together.

That process took ten years to culminate in the production and exhibition of an object which, had it been intervened at the time of its “appropriation,” would have become a nonsensical version of its intrinsic nature.

The piece in question is the box of five engravings, a limited edition by Sandro Chia; it was supposed to remain whole, with its engravings and all the supplementary material as one unit. The fate of the five engravings remains unknown; but it is clear what would have become of the box and its contents had not the artist acted and rescued it at the precise moment.

Ten years later, the time came when the pieces fit together.

“XXI / XX” is the title of this piece – which is composed of eleven elements, intervened by the artist in both their appearance and in their meaning. Regarding the words: some have been moved, others turned over or turned around, and still others silenced; but those that remain acquired a new meaning, a new discourse; they have become a new “poem.”

The idea to develop this intervention came out of the practice of executing another series, that of the “Haikus,” where by taking the unchanged names of the color chart of the Benjamin Moore paint company, a series of poems was “built” in the spirit of that Japanese tradition.

One thing leads to another, it could be said.

Both series constitute the parentheses for a period of time - impossible to calculate

a priori –where perhaps, silence made the work more arduous–

Questa cartella
contiene
all'Artista,

Esemplare
48/50

1

essere
corpi
essere
disegnati

the
two
the
two
the two
the two

parole
 perse,
 of the
 which turns
 the gaze,
 backward
 waves of
 ascending air.
 What
 eye requires blank
 worlds
 more than
 reflected there.

reversed,
 mirrors, lost
 mirrors
 of the
 body
 which turns
 the gaze,
 backward
 waves of
 ascending air.
 What
 eye requires blank
 worlds
 more than
 reflected there.

un libro
 come specchio
 ombre,

First water
 Then air
 a
 twin
 mirror
 made of memory,
 as a question,
 which explains
 the intervals of
 the fragment,
 split in half

La misura
 [redacted]
 [redacted]
 [redacted] impossibile
 [redacted]
 [redacted] esiste
 [redacted]
 [redacted]
 [redacted]
 [redacted]
 [redacted]

The [redacted]
 [redacted] body is
 a circle [redacted]
 [redacted] of salt
 [redacted] does not exist
 within [redacted]
 [redacted]
 [redacted] the tips of the fingers
 The [redacted] framed [redacted]
 [redacted] body meet
 the [redacted] imaginary [redacted]

[redacted]
 l'inosservato
 [redacted]
 [redacted] rimane

Curl of [redacted]
 [redacted] the unseen
 [redacted] has disappeared
 as [redacted] remains

be told | apart
Can bodies be | told to | be drawn
part can | be drawn
apart be | told

book of the trace and book of | stair,
book | in the form of bell towers
book of the building of cities | and the burning of cities,
book of the moon as our shadows,
book of the earth | in each of its motions
book of the body and its | light along its string,
double helix of the body as a measure and body
eddies of | mirrors, | and words

book of miter and argonaut, nautilus,
book of the ram's horn lute and the monochord,
book of the winged man and the hanged man,

What of the possible | words
What of the words | heard,
such words meant | for | voices | there,
What book, the hidden book, the signs,
which return. What | appear as real
Then returns the face which
bent light in the body

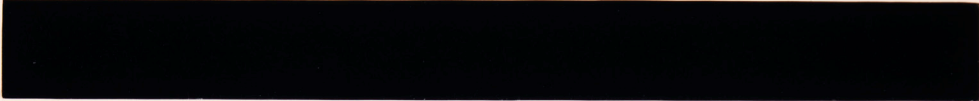
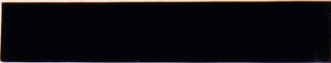
is the measure | on the perfect circle
circle that is impossible
of the imaginary body
The body is | outstretched
and the soles of the feet at rest
is drawn — | around an actual body
it fashions around itself | by mirrored words
and whose circumference it touches
The circle and the | mirror
with body which tastes plane of the encircled —
page | and
It is not visible in the measure of the actual body

write of all
what

leaf and wave
Curve of neck and thigh

As much what
As much

as the visible

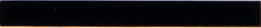


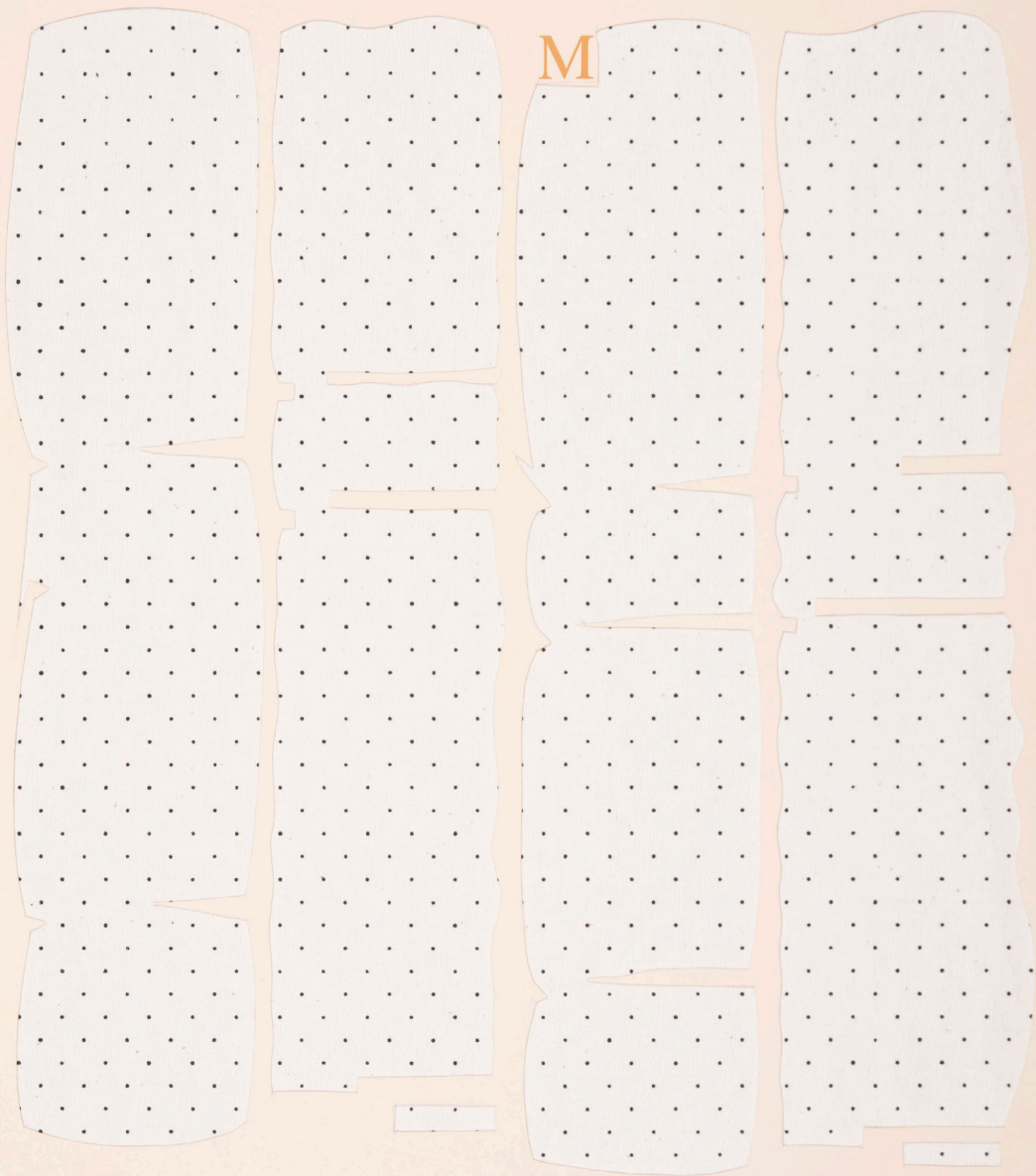
THE [redacted] ART [redacted]

[redacted] FOUND [redacted]

THE [redacted] ENTER | OR [redacted] DIE [redacted]

UNIVERS [redacted] E [redacted]







“Questa cartella contiene all’Artista
esemplare”, From the XXI / XX Box, 2019
Paper, Wallpaper
30” x 22 1/4”

“Essere corpi, essere disegnati”, From the
XXI / XX Box, 2019
Paper, Wallpaper
30” x 22 1/4”

“Parole perse, veri”, From the XXI / XX
Box, 2019
Paper, Wallpaper
30” x 22 1/4”

“Un libro come specchio, libro ombre”,
From the XXI / XX Box, 2019
Paper, Wallpaper
30” x 22 1/4”

“La misura impossibile esiste”, From the
XXI / XX Box, 2019
Paper, Wallpaper
30” x 22 1/4”

“L’inoservato rimane”, From the XXI / XX
Box, 2019
Paper, Wallpaper
30” x 22 1/4”

“Be told apart, as the visible”, From the
XXI / XX Box, 2019
Paper, Wallpaper
30” x 22 1/4”

“The Art Found the Enter or Die Universe”,
From the XXI / XX Box, 2019
Paper, Wallpaper
30” x 22 1/4”

“MA-AM, re-collection”, From the XXI /
XX Box, 2019
Paper, Wallpaper
30” x 22 1/4”

“Two, Sandro, Palmer”, From the XXI / XX
Box, 2019
Paper
72” x 30 1/2”

“The Box”, From the XXI / XX Box, 2019
Cardboard, Paper, Wallpaper, Vinyl, Fabric
48” x 32” x 2 1/4”

Esculturas de vacío / Dibujos de plenitud

Haikus

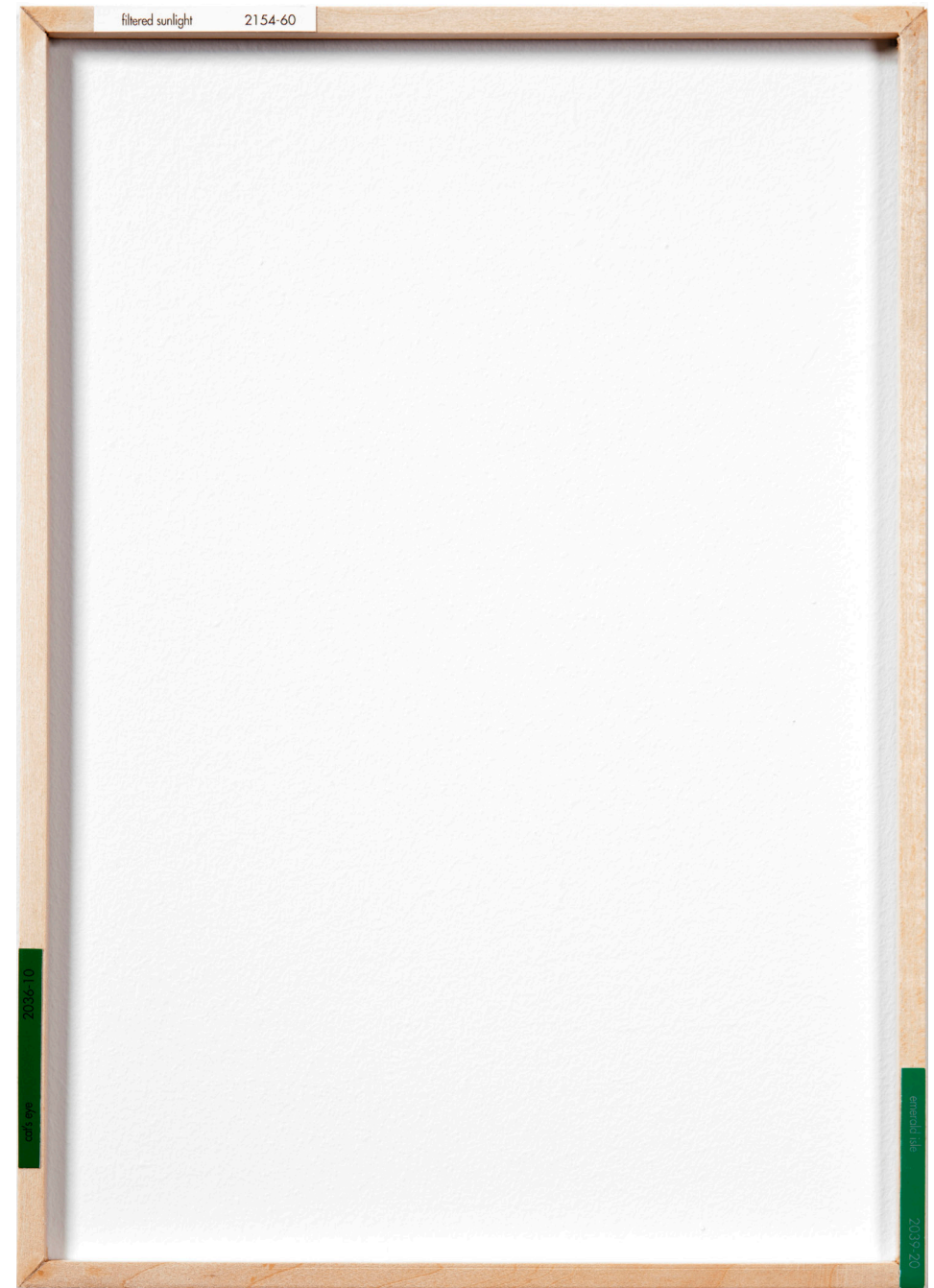
Text by Roc Laseca

I Name the limit

Andrés Michelena begins to measure, cut and sand some very small wooden slats. They are prismatic rods of two different lengths. He arranges them in an orderly fashion and begins to build with them very light frames that he reinforces in their corners with wooden crossbeams. They are the circumscription of space. Or rather, they are the name of the void. Everything is in there, an infinite space framed. It is the expression of power, the dissolution of power. Everything there, now, is a promise. So perhaps, the only option left is to start working on its edges. On those same rods. Name the limit. Walk to the edge of the abyss between the inner emptiness and the outer void. Among all that could be placed in that limit, choose to have the only thing that, in the end, we understand that could exist: samples of language. Literally. An assortment of words. A palette of linguistic options that will come to name the unnameable. It is a dance of terms and compositions that extracts from the well-known chromatic sample of the company Benjamin Moore. They are originally the names of their colors ("broken arrow", "spirit of the sky"...) that in and of themselves give to know a certain poetic will that seems to have infiltrated in the system of industrial cataloging of Benjamin Moore. How could it be otherwise, the words that Michelena uses are not his. And they are not there to refer to a specific story. Language always comes from the other side. It is never the one who speaks. And in this case, it is not he who paints. There are colors, there are words, there are frames. But there is no picture, there is no story.

What extends is a huge infinite and deep void surrounded by small chromatic samples and suggestive names. An inverted poetics. They are haikus, respecting as far as possible, the formal structure of three verses, always suspended by a break: the sudden break of the kireji, a cut that separates them and that is the unforeseen term that characterizes this Zen composition. An astonishment that is achieved in haiku to translate the experience that his poet originally had contemplating nature. Here the haiku has industrial origin. Its terms are those of a commercial chromatic palette, and contemplation shrinks to its minimums. There is no nature to be seen, other than the perimeter path of the frame that makes us turn our heads to follow the reading of the poem. We see ourselves performing a reading around a void. The contortion of the neck reminds us of our physical existence while the mind tries to link the terms that run along the perimeter. It is not orthodox, but since Matsuo Bashō (17th century), many poets usually accompany their haikus with a small illustration, which they call haiga. It seems that here, Michelena's work has consisted, in part, in providing the technical work material for those light paintings for others. His are not the words he uses in his haikus. Neither are the frames he constructs. This undoing of the person is part of a special will. In fact, for the amazement of contemplation to be translated into the amazement of haiku, it is indispensable that the haijin, the author, be eliminated from the process. The disappearance of the ego is correlated here to the disappearance of the visible. Nothing to see. Nobody who sees.

Abstraction is absolute. And yet, the experience is sensitive. Eliminating the visual in artistic practice, or reducing it to its minimum expressions, was always part of the agenda and the program of modernity. Perhaps one of its most widespread forms will end up giving birth to the foundations of conceptual art. This work is openly: it discusses the visual dimension to provide new tools that are available between analysis and contemplation. Stop seeing to start contemplating.



#9
The cat's eye
The filtered sunlight,
An emerald isle!

II Vital Displacement

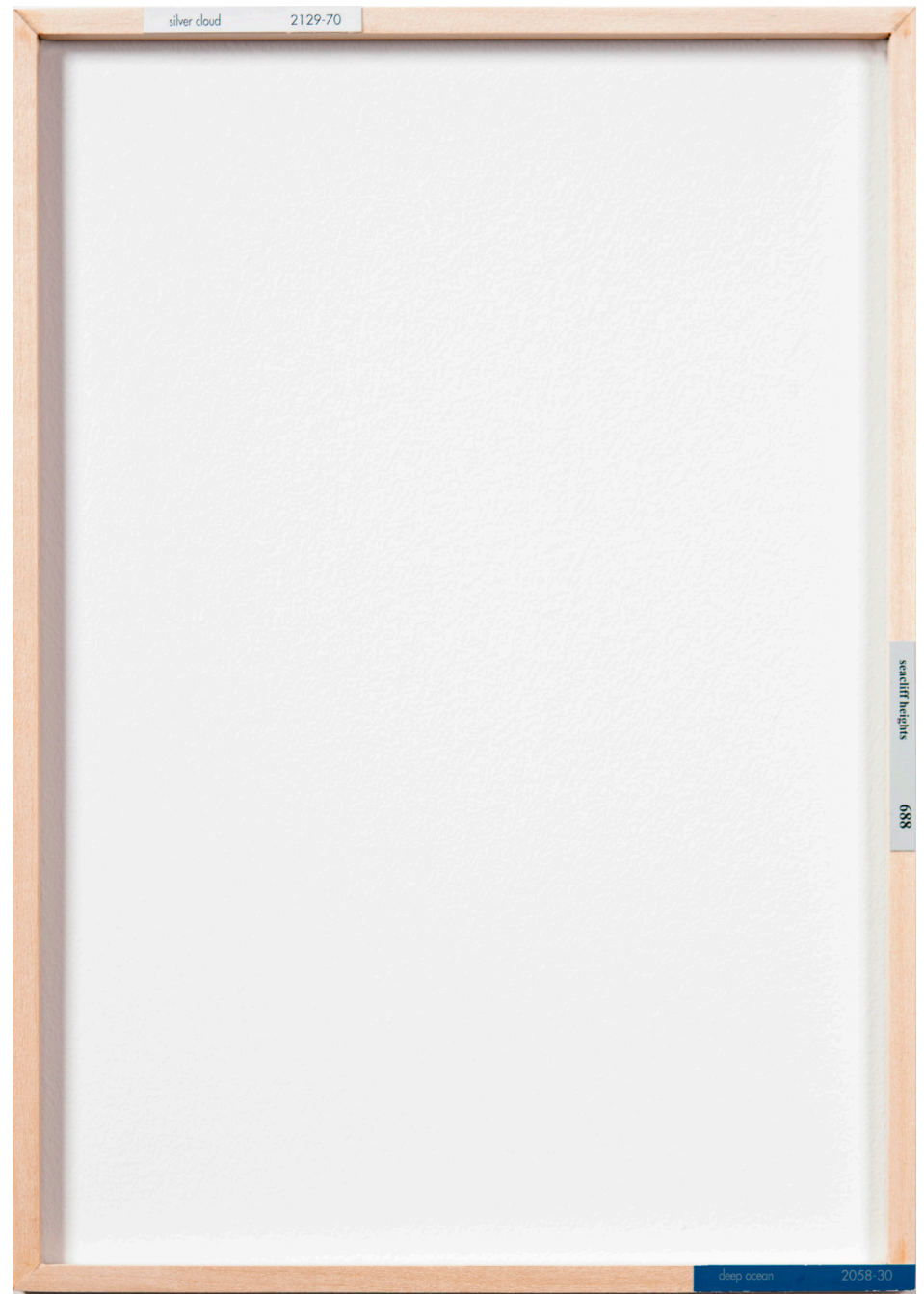
Usually, things mean something different than what they are. The meaning, therefore, is a substitute for the thing, and we have been determined to live in a world of meanings, not of things. We understood, from our Western tradition (which is nothing but the sum of infinite interpretations we have made of Aristotelian thought), that it was more enriching to live surrounded by symbols, icons and signs-the famous semiotic triad-than to do it surrounded by the world, of life, of things. It was not worth living our life, it was necessary to signify it. Give it a value Provide it with a supposed content that we place at a distance-miles away-from life itself. Since then, we live surrounded by stories, stories that are not intended to tell things, but replace the world by its meaning. We are immersed in an exasperating continuous movement, which links one story with another, which substitutes one experience for another. It is the rule of language. We tell ourselves things to narrate ourselves. To begin to discover who we are, and how we can continue subsisting enrolled in those same stories. Be narration. Believe our own stories. All this has ended up deriving in a mechanics of transcendence, of order, of teleology, of separation: our language has colonized the world and, as a consequence, has separated us from it. Now, what happens when language itself attends to language? What opens there when the distance between the world, life and language is drastically narrowed?

III The images here

The haiku is not a thing, it is a relationship. But it is not a relationship between subjects, nor between stories. Nor is it a relationship between bodies. It is an intimate and close relationship between language and language itself. A performative work of radicalism that puts language in contact with itself. Neither does diction -what we can emphasize or say about it-, but language as an energetic structure, as what we are even before throwing images at each other. In fact, there are no images here. There are not explicitly in Michelena's haikus. The frame is a lifesaver. It fleets. It is a floating signifier. Jaques Rancière wondered if the images really wanted to live. Probably yes; Probably, what they seek is to survive at all costs. And they do so when they recognize their status as an intermediate statute: images are more than illusions and less than living organisms. It is from this autonomous statute that they can obtain their political virtue. Politics is a mediation, perhaps the most explicit one. But mediations do not occur when one deals with oneself. When language is structured to speak to itself. To know what we are, there should be no mediation. There is no possible space that opens between one and oneself. Unless, as usual, one is out of control. Displaced. That displacement occupies the space in which the haiku opens. Its surprising nature stretches and radicalizes our relationship with the terms, with the images it conveys and with the structure that sustains them. The haiku forces us to be attentive.



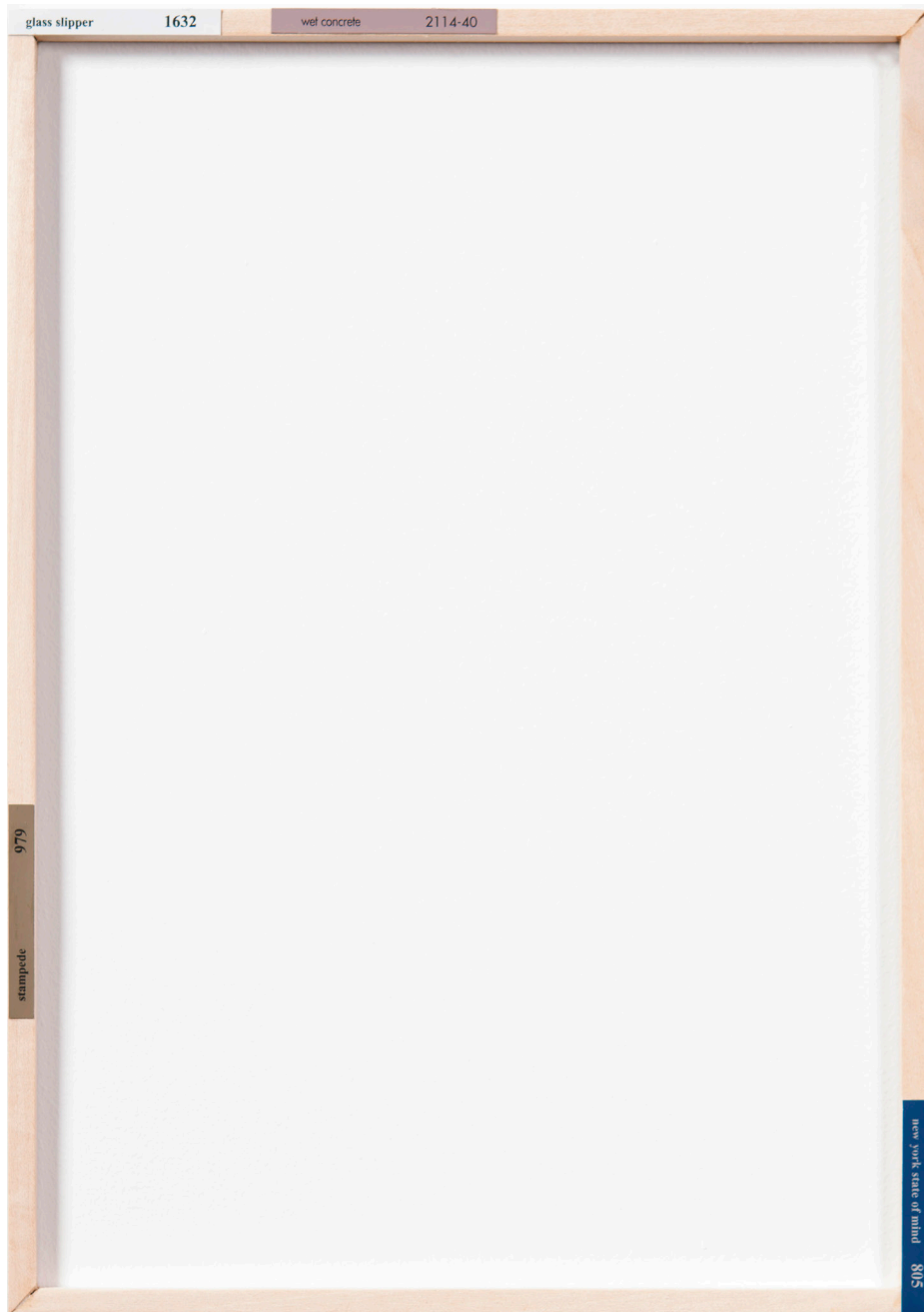
#6
Vintage wine
On golden chalice
Heaven on earth



#4
A silver cloud
Over the sea-cliff heights
Deep ocean below

Attention is the only safe conduct to read and understand haiku. It makes us be present. Only by presence, everything will be in place. The opposite is interpretation, mediation, systems of meaning. Here the haiku is correlated, in part, to the tradition of the concrete poetry of the West. The physical disposition of the terms, the plasticity of the words, the composition and the linguistic collages were claimed by the concretism as a way of emptying the term, of working exclusively with the signifier, of evacuating the cultural references of the language to begin to see the material dimension of its structure. The tongue made flesh, before being a body, before organizing itself as an autonomous entity, as a system of ordering parts. These haikus of Michelena also recover the composition system of the concrete poetry: the assembly appears as the work code above the original authorship. The versification is subject to the spatial composition, its geometric forms. In this case, the rectangle will be its leit-motiv, which, together with the circle and the triangle, appear as the most usual geometric planes of the concrete tradition since 1930. Contrary to this tradition, however, Michelena also resorts to color, to his reference at least, to synthesize what chromatism can refer to in a simple code of names, references, possible fields. Do not paint, name the palette. It is a ritual, a convocation, a call to the void and to the possible. The synthetic writing is aligned with a visuality also synthesized that gathers what the frame can, with what the haiku can. What is capable of referring the physical structure of the work and what is able to infer the tightrope walking through the fine edge of its frame.

Both poles are reunited again, as the graphic sign and the deep meaning of the text that, from our Western habits, we have tended to detach. Here his reconciliation reminds us that words are also things, that they gravitate, occupy a volume and have the right to life. They are not always obliged to order the world, to hierarchize reality, to propose a constant order of things. They can also be world themselves, relate to other entities, hesitate on the edge of a vacuum.



#7
After the stampede
A glass slipper on wet concrete,
New York state of mind

This catalog was published on the occasion of the exhibition “...the two”
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XXI / XX Text: Andrés Michelena
Translation: Antonio Reyes Bejarán

Haikus Text: Roc Laseca

Photography: Mariano Costa Peuser

Design and Layout: Andrea Moratinos

andresmichelena.art@gmail.com

www.andresmichelena.art

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To Mamuchi



