

Hélène Yamba - Guimbi

*H was born in 1995, France. She sways and works between Paris and California.



Hélène was born in 1995 in a rural beach town in Brittany, France.

After an initial education in textile arts, she graduated from an MFA in Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Arts de Paris-Cergy in Cergy in 2023 and a master of Aesthetics and Politics at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, California. She has recently exhibited her work at the Brooklyn Museum (New York), Ygrec (Paris) and read her poetry at the Centre International de la Poésie (Marseille) and Le Centre Wallonie Bruxelles (Paris).



Art Düsseldorf 2026, Installation Views, 2026



Where Serpent Never Hisses,

exhibition view

(Cicadas, Chaos Magic, Foreign (2))

2026







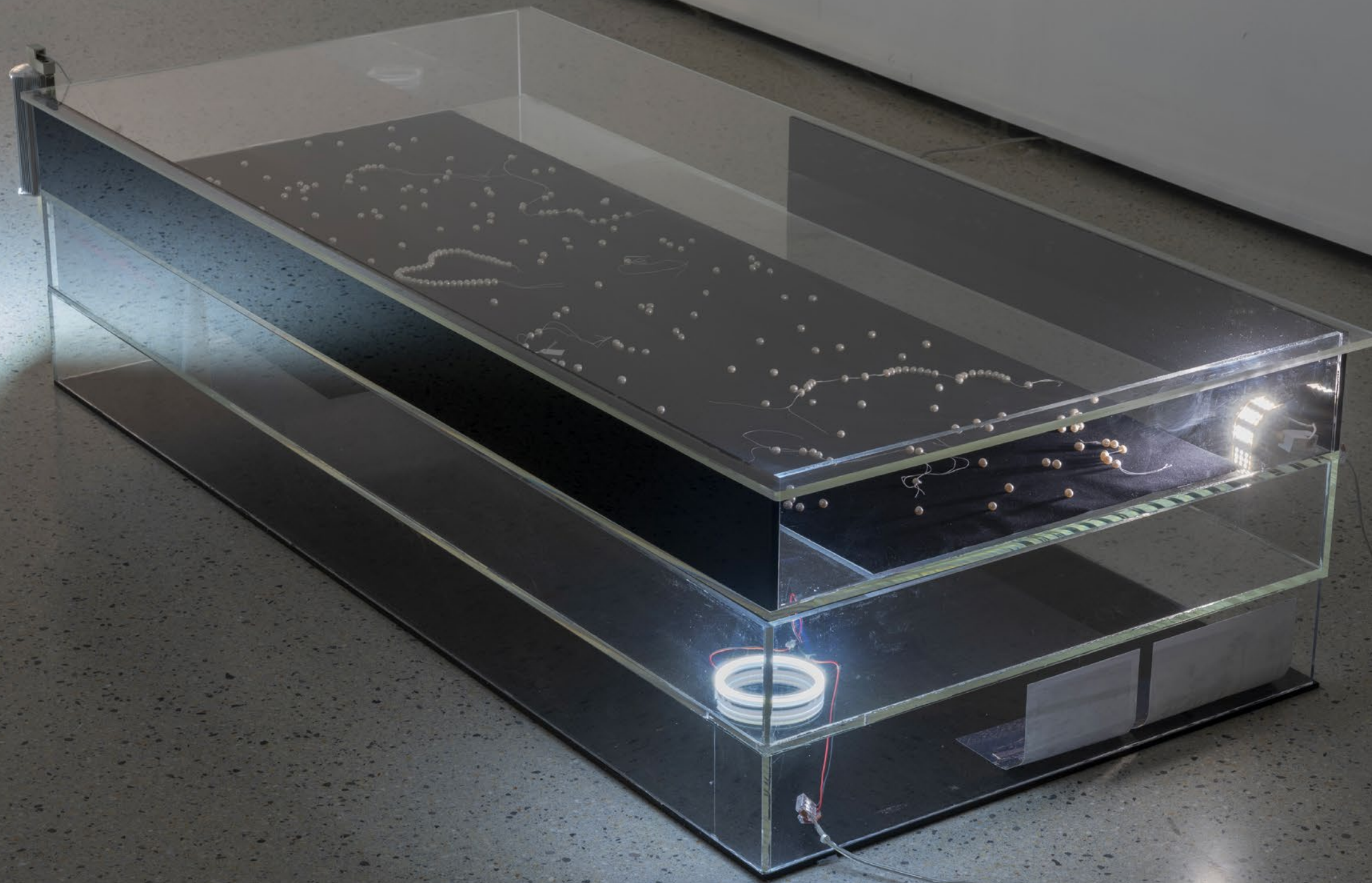


h Where serpent never
 i s s e s
 Language is a set of flimsy hinges
 articulating thought itself names nouns verbs
 moods shape sentences sentences carve spaces for
 movement to happen storytelling sets the world in
 forward motion they mean desire to name stalls mid-motion
 for language they mean desire to name stalls mid-motion
 action scrapes against movement finally signifies we change language
 the moment where silence sprouts desire wings but guess again
 we lose eyesight other fathers before us but from fathers and mothers
 motion doesn't even come from us but from fathers and mothers
 who followed I didn't have time for self-pity mayhem or loot
 me After T got sacked I didn't have time for self-pity mayhem or loot
 K was gone and nothing left was worth yearning for the same way a
 limb is cut to stop death from spreading I wiped the past and made up
 names whole shiny and new I drifted through N reached an island
 of narrow streets and steep volcanoes I was chasing dogs for a few months
 on one October day I felt a string of tiny earthquakes at the surface of a dirt
 road Danger was coming it always comes the furthest I could go where the
 supposed so I went back to sea swam the hottest I could go where the
 earth slides into the sea one could desire to live in nobody knew me there
 only leafblowers data brokers and policemen everyday yearnings kept
 me occupied from K's rotten memories and a few coins in my pants
 walking up Hollywood Boulevard head and heart wept away I had
 crossed oceans and slain bloodlines yet facing them their
 mind still like a riddle determination was weak obsession was
 strong and I was stuck again searching for beads of clarity in
 one's silences thankfully love doesn't turn
 me very gentle or kind against K's perpetual trickeries I
 clamped their skull between my two hands like a ring
 and spat on their petty little eyes still slipping
 me—the street carrying me onward without
 a s k i n g





Cecil hotel (low) acrylic sheets, electric cords, fixtures, glue, heat sinks, light bulbs, mirror panel, photographs, R7S light bulbs, red velvet, thermal duct, thermal pads, wagos, wood
150×68.cmx38cm 2025



Hotspot (void version)

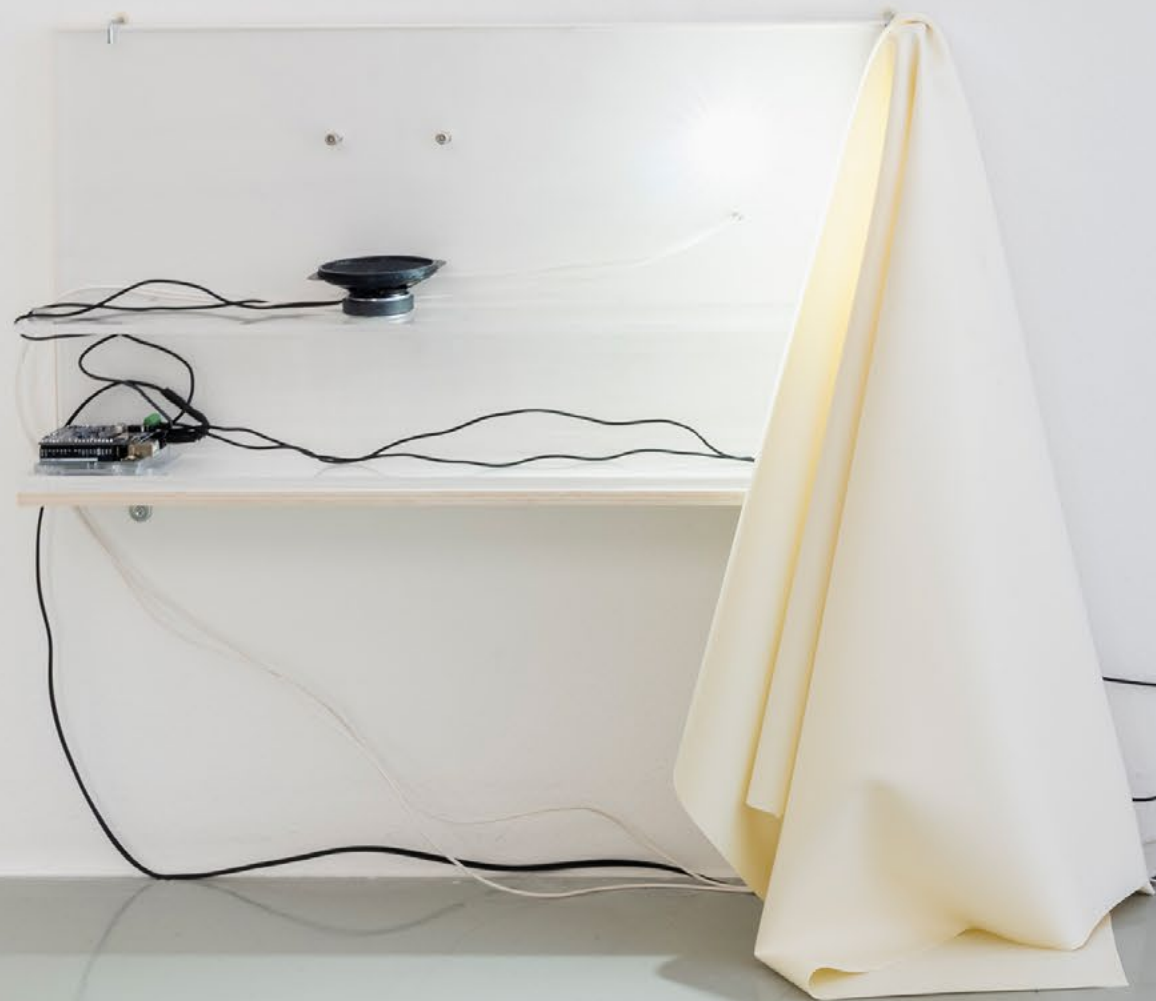
acrylic sheets, electric cords, fixtures, glue, light bulbs, photographs, ring light, R7S light bulbs, saltwater pearls, thread, velvet, wagos, wood

150x68.cmx38cm

2025













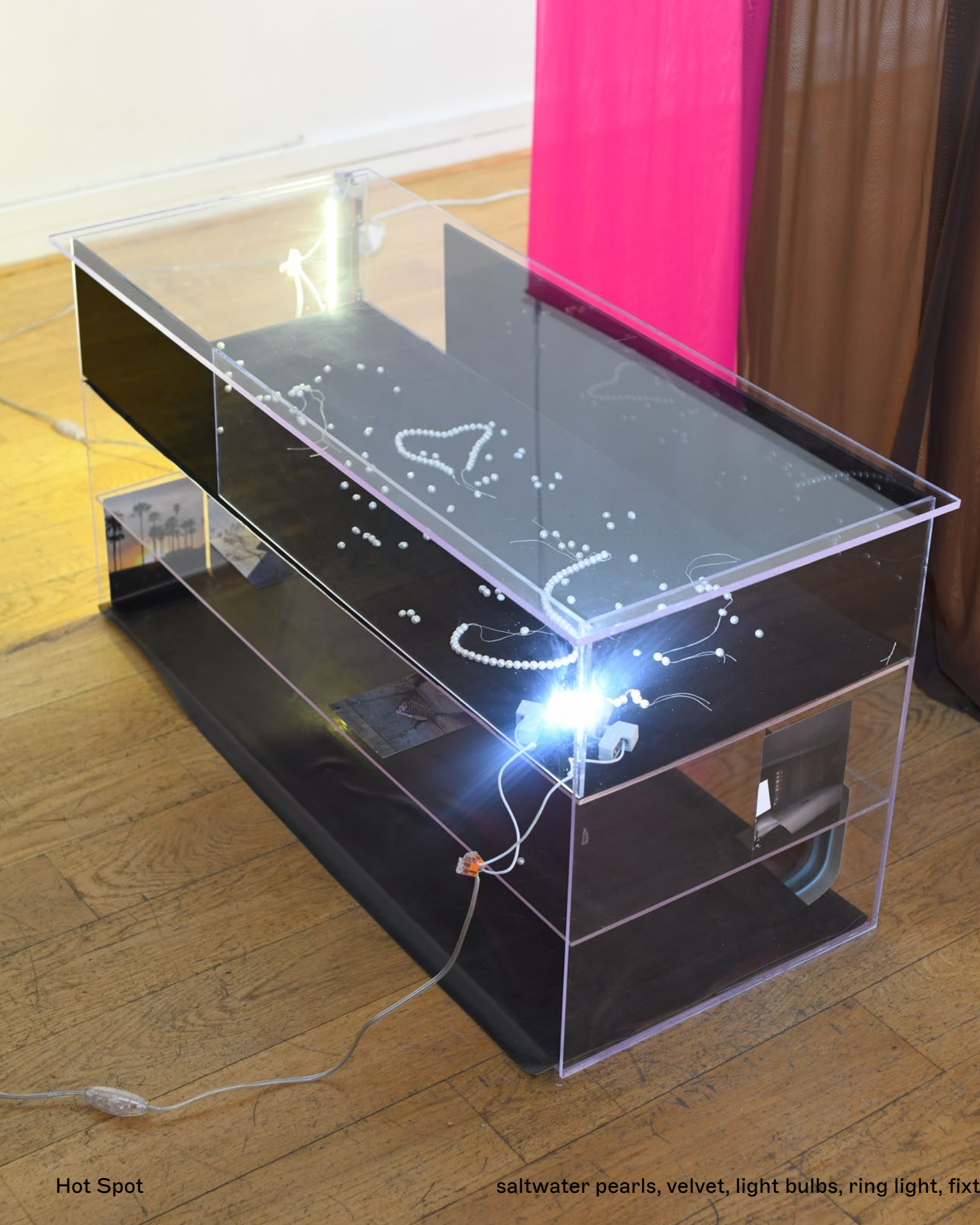




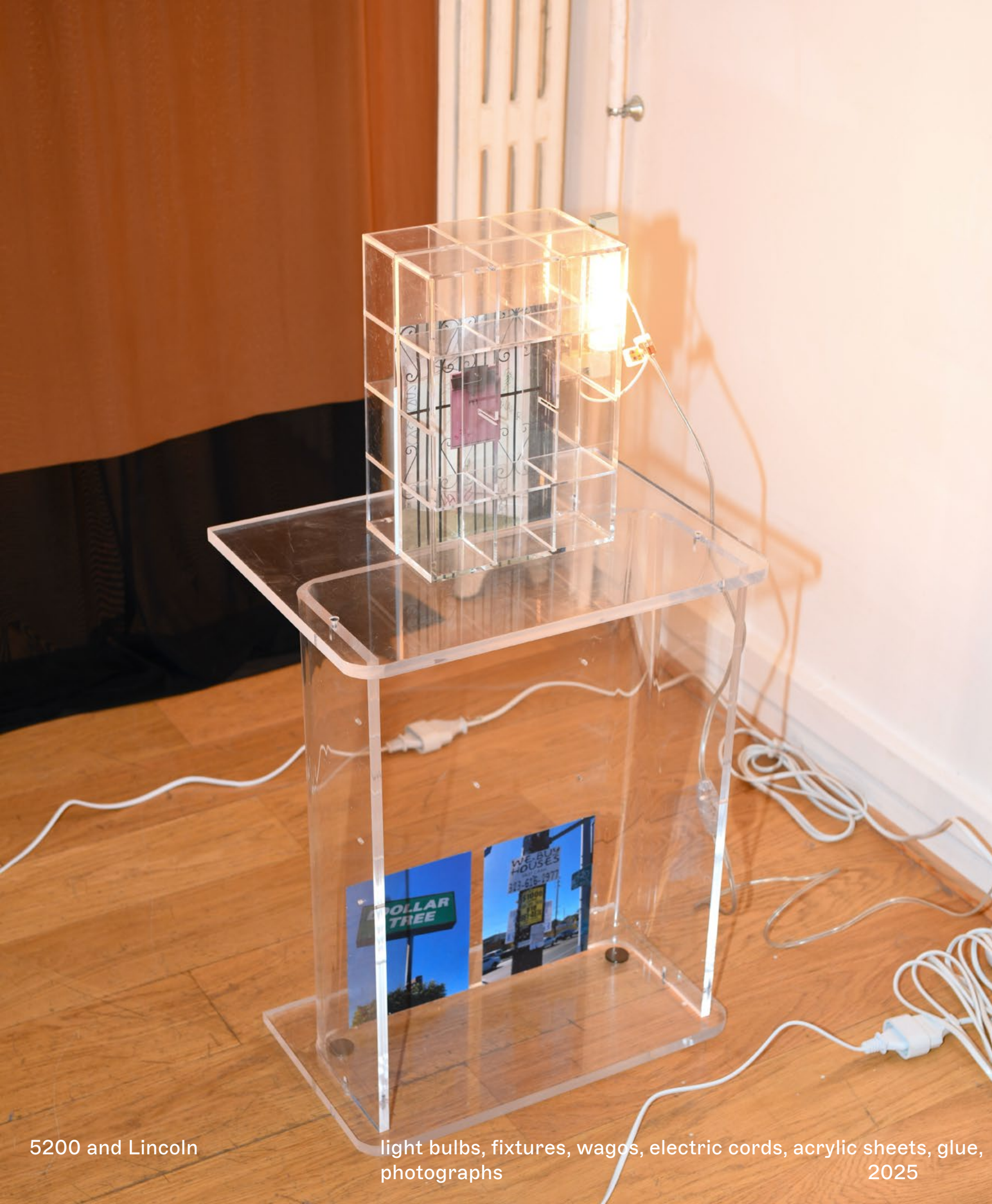


Dazzle, Tether

exhibition view

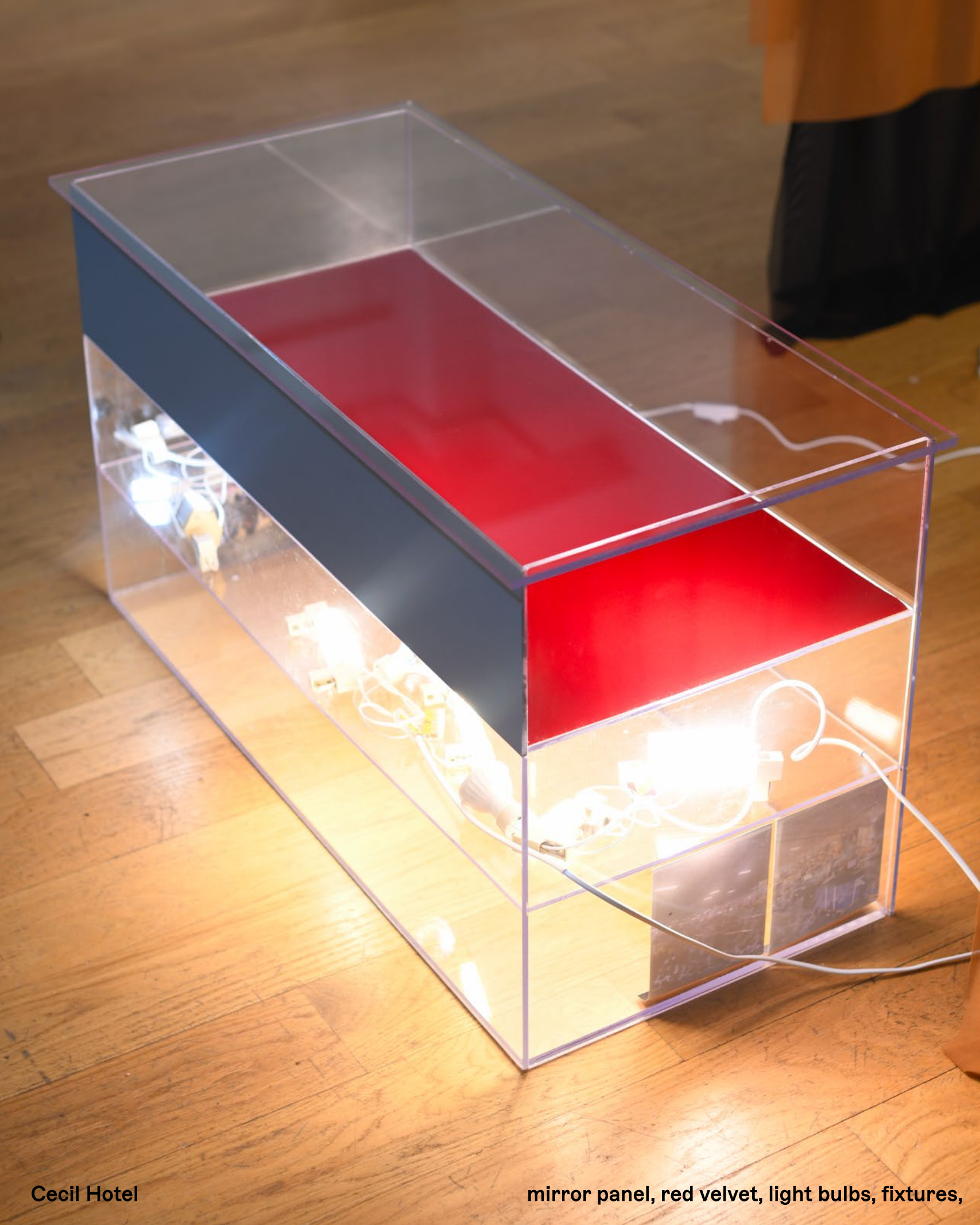






5200 and Lincoln

light bulbs, fixtures, wagos, electric cords, acrylic sheets, glue,
photographs 2025





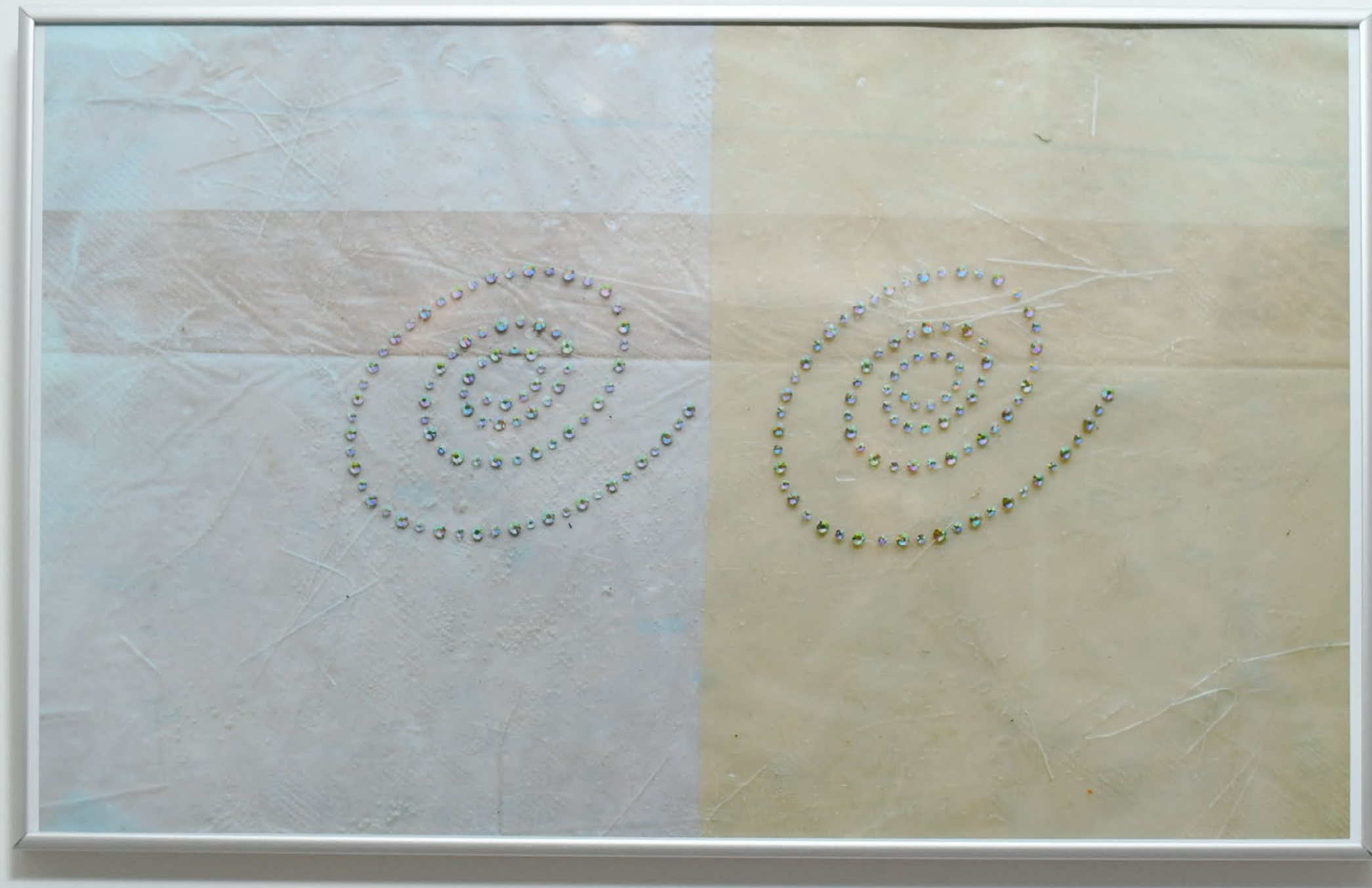


Cixous' Ladder (right)

photograph mounted on pine wood, glass

and Spin Spun Out: Involution (left)

photograph on aluminium frame, plexiglass, 2025



The Good Wills of America (2024)

I came to Los Angeles through a back alley door, pushed by the sense that I had exhausted all possibles in N, and urged by a romantic mishap from which I was determined to outshine. My story isn't one of passion, ambition, and excess — When I moved here, I had no specific goal in mind. My one hope was that this country would become a new vessel for all my empty promises: a place to fix the past versions of myself I had failed to become and the futures I still wished to see. Until then, I always had itchy feet. This time, I embraced normalcy: took an office job, signed a lease, bought a 4Runner, and drove my way. I was ready to enjoy the sparseness, the flat, the cute, the subtle summer variations that lull the city to sleep. Before, I often felt the urge to dissociate until I realized it would turn me a puppet for external shareholders. Now, I was done fighting those obstacles. They say you reveal yourself by shedding masks over time to uncover a hidden core. The country didn't strip me down; it dissolved me. To become from here, I peeled back my skin until nothing punk-poor remained. I gulped my passion for friction, swallowed deep down. I rounded off my edges. I listened to the peeping cop in my head, whispering at every turn. I embraced passive assertivity. I made space for the fragmentation of my attention. I scattered my energy between Zoom calls, Sunday organic markets, good credit ratings, halfway conversations, and dating apps. I tucked my private dust dreams under the bed, trading them for a magnified social persona. I am not a bastion of resolve; against foes and pressures, I'm open to change, and I won't be crushed. Playing different won't protect you in times of collective corporate delulu. I was lying on the side of a bed the other day with a pretty French girl — she smelled like soap and margaritas. She played with my hair, then said, 'You're nice, but I can't see your face.' Some eyes and faces are wide open doors leading to landscapes; mine is a fence. And because desiring something always involves the uncertain transformation of the current state of things as they are, I'd rather accept the slow work of positive self-erasure than chase after change. Repressing my private fantasies in favor of collective ones helped me engage more with others: I am no longer ruled by the fear of vulnerability or attachment.



Group show and exhibition view at Paris Internationale

(on the floor from right to left : The Good Wills of America, Bachelor Machines, Suture)



Installation view



Boxes from various personal moves between France and Los Angeles are repurposed and inhabited with fabrics and materials sourced from Goodwill. 'The Good Wills of America' is a pun, weaving a narrative of geographical splintering and desolation in the USA.

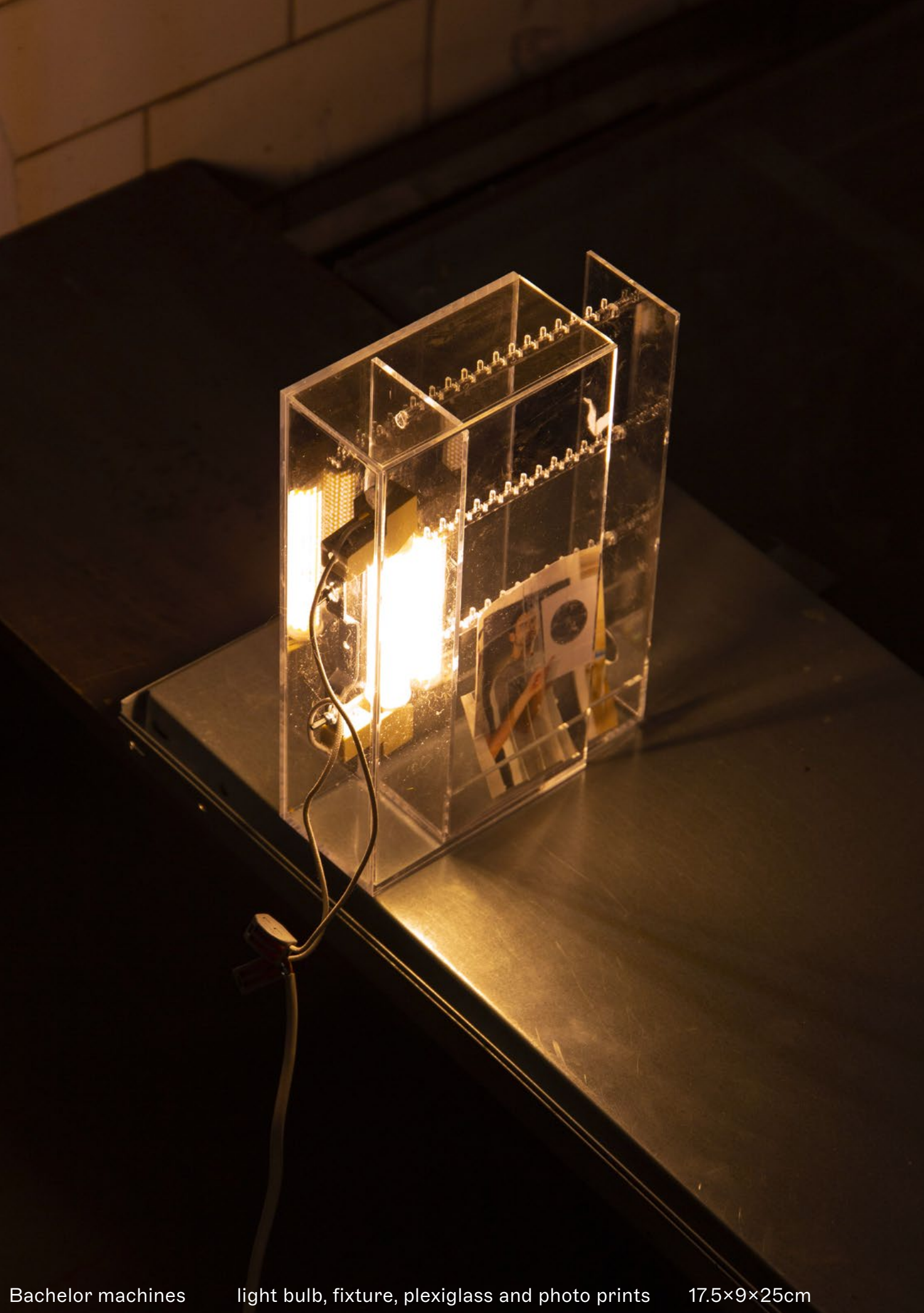




details



Muji boxes from second-hand sites are transformed into illuminated reliquaries, housing traces of past lives. Each light serves as an abstraction of a specific emotion or moment, drawing inspiration from Sara Ahmed's theory of emotions to crystallize ambiguous feelings.



Bachelor machines light bulb, fixture, plexiglass and photo prints 17.5×9×25cm



Bachelor machines (2) 25.5 x7.0×10.0cm



installation view

Ygreves, 2022





* and † copper, palladium, gold, polyester plaster, woven nests made of metal



This piece was created by Xavier Antin, with a strong contribution from H el ene Yamba-Guimbi. They were part of the exhibition 'The Weavers,' and draws inspiration from weaving birds' intricate nests. H el ene created copper nests, while Xavier reproduced a thermic computer. The sculpture, resembling working groups and organic entities, interacts via AI scripts with other ones, exploring notions such as empathy, memory, and economy.



Lessness
self-publication, Paris, 2023



Less ness



Lessness est composé de deux
lettres écrites à deux écrivains, trois notes
théoriques sur le langage et sur la traduction ainsi que de
quatre poèmes (.....)

Lessness is a recollection of different short critical essays on language, minor literatures, and poetry. The book takes its origins from an extended lecture on David Antin and Emmanuel Hocquard, — both who are poets and critics.

Starting from this, the book opens with two letters written to two authors —David Antin and Zadie Smith, another inspiration — and proceeds with three theoretical notes on language and translation followed by a few poems.

Perros de la Calle (2021)

Never fill holes in the conversations
between a ? between a ... !

Perros

rather spill their thirsty black
tongue into their wounds

the body the eye
the only thing they got

are turning over stones
looking for suspicious words

No melody to the moon
nor whinings nor statements

sweaty tongue is dragging the floor
gut feelings twirl thru the bushes

a passing glance
a bird rustle

all dead now

We lie in frustration
— pitch-dark

searching for some rest
in The city

We better compose
bursts of Silence
sparks of (ellipses)

episodes of
— withdrawals

Those inner lights are Black Holes
buzzing from our chests

a need not to mix —
with the chaosmos of the schizoid city

Closing
is a (...) breath ?

forming (.....) resistance ?
shaping (.....) absences?
curving (.....) echoes ?

out of sight

We stand

bittersweet — ok,
but slightly away,

shaping and drifting
echoing people from the past

yet positively
not dead

Lessness

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Nous sommes beaucoup à vivre dans une langue qui n'est pas la nôtre. Ce qui peut être dit dans une langue ne peut pas être dit dans une autre, et le découpage entre ce qui est dicible et ce qui ne l'est pas varie depuis chaque langue et les rapports qu'elles entretiennent entre elles.

Afin d'expliquer le mode de fonctionnement des multilinguistes choisis ou forcés, Henri Gobard propose un modèle qu'il nomme tétralinguistique pour décrire la distribution des pratiques langagières

langue vernaculaire
véhiculaire (de société, professionnelle, de cashflow)
référentielle
désignerait afin de créer du sens et de la culture en dernier la langue mythique ou religieuse

il y aurait la
la langue
la langue
celle qu'on
Elias Canetti

était un écrivain juif et bulgare exilé un peu partout en Europe. Il parlait par une constellation de langues, mais il avait surtout appris l'allemand sur le tard par sa mère. Pour cet attachement particulier qui le liait à l'allemand qu'il voyait comme la langue de *la culture*. Il disait

(bien que j'habite en Grande Bretagne, en Suisse je m'exile un peu partout, malgré la Shoah, malgré la difficulté à faire diffuser mon travail dans cette etc..) la langue allemande restera la langue de l'esprit

À travers ces mots on peut voir que chaque langue comporte un ou plusieurs centres de pouvoirs différents ainsi qu'un rapport aux normes langagières qui ne se situe pas aux mêmes endroits du mode d'expression pour chaque langue. Cultiver plusieurs langues serait une des possibilités d'échapper à ces centres de pouvoirs imprégnés de langues

déplacement (si on change notre seuil de visibilité sur les choses changeant de contexte linguistique, ou en l'intérieur d'un contexte multilinguistique on peut apercevoir un appel à des codes et des informations jusqu'à-là cachées par la langue kidnapeuse ... maternelle ... majeure ... colon

- *
— Perros de la Calle (0:57) 2022
- *
— Schizoid City (1:16) 2023
- *
— Rétine (1:30) 2023
- *
— Big Love (2:32) 2023
- *
— The Good Wills of America (4:01) 2025
- *
— Where serpent never hisses (4:01) 2026

To Hold and Be Held (2025)

By Vincent van Velsen

A sculpture is like a person. There is an appearance that we see when we first encounter the work. There is a background that we can read when we make an effort. Then there is the content and context that we can learn about if we ask further. And beyond that immediate knowledge there is a whole history that can be explored. Here, interpretations, knowledge and relationships come into play.

In the work of H el ene Yamba-Guimbi the same kind of cascading acquaintance exists. Her recent sculptures resemble minimalist, transparent display cases whose life began as storage boxes. She has been showing different iterations of these forms since 2021, but it was only this year that they started to become inhabited by photos and colored sheets that go against the transparent nature of these objects. Through these additions H el ene Yamba-Guimbi’s sculptures became spaces for gatherings in which other objects sit together: elements from different geographies and moments come together to give rise to something new. Yamba-Guimbi roves the streets of Los Angeles, photographing what strikes her.

What emerges are snapshots of the city’s everyday signage and surfaces. Billboards and shopfronts urge passersby to “Establish Credit History”, get “Fast Cash”, “Free Towing” or “Get Paid” —echoes of loneliness, isolation and dreadful poverty in the potential paradise that is the richest country on the planet. H el ene Yamba-Guimbi captures the paradox of hyper-capitalism and weaves these photographs into the fabric of her work. Presented alongside poems and lights, the images are not merely documentation but integral part of her sculptural assemblages. These lamps in themselves introduce another paradox: they allow us to see what is present, but also blind us in order to keep us from inspecting it too closely. It becomes a metaphor for having the potential that lies there at one’s toes, while the boundaries to engage prevent real interactions. H el ene Yamba-Guimbi brings together moments, languages and places into quiet constellations that draw us into relation, attuning us to the contours of distance, proximity and the fragile bonds between us.

At a time characterized by mechanisms of distinction that are silently applied and noticed, her minimalist design language stems from cultural relevance. Current-day stealth wealth and quiet luxury reject screaming patterns and loud colors. There is a focus on refined materials and silhouettes with details only recognized by the in-crowd—if you know, you know. It’s a class coding with a secret password. Many people use storage boxes similar to the sculptures as well-designed, good-looking, well-functioning objects in their living environments. Its Japanese design is rooted as much in lived experience as in functionality. These principles, the attention to craft, material, and detail, have found numerous commercial expressions that have resonated with a wider audience. And as readymade containers, here also in the arts.

In a modest yet incisive way, Yamba-Guimbi’s works respond to questions of desire, appearance, and the quiet economies that shape how we move through the world. Her sculptural storage boxes themselves are evidence of the fact that taste can be affordable—provided you *know* what the right aesthetic is. Their minimal forms and subtle materials evade easy classification, yet those attuned to certain visual cues will recognize their aesthetic alignment. This quiet legibility—perceptible only to the initiated—reinforces their value not through cost or rarity, but through coded familiarity and cultural discernment. It’s in the way people move and in how they hold and carry themselves. While aspiration might be universal, taste cannot be bought. In that vein, Yamba-Guimbi shows us thrift stores and storage spaces without people, empty motel rooms, dead-end corridors, and streets with graffiti. In these photographs that were mainly taken in Los Angeles the artist shows the city devoid of any direct human presence.

This absence could be alluding to the consumer culture of the United States, the mythology of the American Dream, and the bankruptcy of society it conceals. The long-held belief that hard work guarantees reward has devolved into a collective and cruel illusion in which we are all donkeys chasing a carrot that forever dangles just out of reach. Everything will get better later; and since we can’t find anything else to eat at the moment, we keep walking, often even running, to get the carrot. It is the fate of the American Dream as an accepted delusion in a world marked by Technofuturism and nostalgia. A toxic combination accompanied by fascism on the rise—both in Europe and the US. The promise of the future has made way for a hypercapitalist society that is driven by na ive nostalgia.

Many Western countries are longing for the fifties, when life was easy and cheap, heavy industry was flourishing, America was great, and Europe was white. Moving toward the future while wanting to go back reminds me of Octavia E. Butler’s writings, in which she describes our current days, which are technologically advanced, but the vast majority of people are unable to access, let alone benefit from this progression. The Hobbesian war of all against all is reloaded in Butler’s novels, of which *The Parable of the Sower* (1993) is best known.

Yamba-Guimbi’s small-scale photos are embedded within the described sculptures, which are stacked containers that take on the function of minimalist glass vitrines. On the one hand, the act of placing objects within these containers is reminiscent of the way cherished belongings are arranged in elegant, carefully chosen storage objects. On the other hand, the gesture has similarities to the way brains store knowledge, experiences, and memories, where novel input sparks fresh associations, giving rise to new thoughts and unexpected combinations. If we approach these sculptural assemblages as we might a person, histories and places visited come together within a layered structure. What you come to know is based on how closely you look, how closely you delve, and from what perspective this looking takes place.

Within this shared space, the individual aspects enter new relationships, and—as French-Martinique-born poet and philosopher Édouard Glissant famously said—we all exist in relation, thereby generating new meaning. Interaction inevitably takes place, which causes new knowledge to emerge. The sand erodes on one shore and washes up on the next beach, where it comes together with grains and pebbles from other places and times.

Migration does just that. Bringing grains and pebbles from different places together. With people, along come cultures and languages. The language of the Metropole is influenced by the influx of others. Initially their contributions are labeled as street or slang and sometimes as an accent or dialect. But the longer the presence lasts and the more it mixes with the initial culture, the more it seeps through and brings about change. Initially this is still identifiable or distinguishable, but over time there is a seamless incorporation of the one into the other.

Every culture is creole. Englishman in New York, or Française in Los Angeles, the combination creates new meanings. Just as every person is an assemblage of histories, genetic compositions and cultures.

For this matter, Hélène Yamba-Guimbi uses the term ‘speaking in tongues’, which she borrows from Zadie Smith. The British author speaks about an exploration of how where you come from shows itself in your mouth, your way of speaking. And how, as your way of speaking changes, you actually change where you come from and belong to. We speak different languages at different times.

Anyone who is multilingual knows how often one switches, but even those with only one language move within its folds, bending tone, accent, intonation, slang, or formal versions to match the moment: code switching. Identity is never static, the contemporary call for self-improvement and the migrant dream of a better life elsewhere are merged. Meaning changes based on context and circumstance. Identity is thus an ever-changing entity, and we can dream of bettering ourselves: physically, mentally and financially.

Los Angeles is the place where this potential is ever present. Hollywood, acting, a new life, fake it until you make it, in relative new city on the Pacific coast. But L.A. also provides circumstances in which people get lost in the rat race and become hopeless. Hélène Yamba-Guimbi refers to cultural theorist Lauren Berlant, who questions the idea of the “good life” as an ideological, normative, and marketable construct: “a fantasy [...] that has become increasingly imaginative, with less and less relation to how we can live”.

In *Cruel Optimism* (2011) Berlant describes the desire or attachment we experience for an object (a person, an idea) that we perceive as a “cluster of promises” even though “evidence abounds of its instability, fragility and all that it costs us.”¹ Especially in turbulent times, like our current ones, this applies to most of our lives. Yamba-Guimbi reflects on how dreams might become dreadful, but also, that there is beauty in the ways that we are still able to live—together.

1 Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2011 via Salome Burstein, Dazzle, Tether, <https://yamba.work/Dazzle,Tether.pdf> 2025

It's not a mid-life crisis trip, it's a victory tour. Trois amies d'enfance – la quarantaine, chacune une teinte différente de blond – se retrouvent pour célébrer leurs *success stories* d'actrice ou de *working moms* dans un resort de luxe en Thaïlande. Elles y croisent la route d'une famille *upper-class* de Caroline du Nord, la mère glamour dopée aux anxiolytiques rassurant le père, un businessman au bord de la crise de nerfs et d'une faillite qu'il tente de dissimuler à son épouse et ses trois enfants. *There's no reason to be stressed Tim... You've already succeeded in every way.* Une même obsession semble animer les client-es du *White Lotus* : celle d'une vie bonne [*good life*], répondant parfois à différents systèmes de valeur mais toujours indexée par la richesse, la beauté, la reconnaissance et le privilège, dans une version *maxed-out* du rêve américain ; une vie bonne et pourtant intenable, qui s'effondre au rythme de chaque épisode – à mesure que ressurgissent les rivalités adolescentes et les addictions de l'âge adulte.

Dans l'introduction de son livre *Cruel Optimism*, l'universitaire américain Lauren Berlant interroge l'idée de la "vie bonne" [*good life*] comme une construction idéologique, normative et marketable : « un fantasme [...] devenu *plus* fantasmagorique, avec de moins en moins de relation avec la façon dont les gens peuvent vivre »¹. *Cruel optimism* est l'expression par laquelle Berlant désigne le désir ou l'attachement éprouvé pour un objet (une personne, une idée) que nous percevons comme un « faisceau de promesses » (cluster of promises) alors même que "les preuves de son instabilité, de sa fragilité et de tout ce qu'il nous coûte abondent"². *Cruel Optimism* était également le titre initial de l'exposition d'Hélène Yamba-Guimbi chez Tonus (Paris).

Feuilletant un chapitre de Berlant, enchaînant sur un autre épisode de la saison 3 du *White Lotus*, quelque chose me porte encore à chercher le premier titre entre les lignes du second. *Dazzle, Tether* : deux mots que la ponctuation sépare, une parataxe qui, sous l'effet visuel de la rupture, vient plutôt éprouver le lien – la virgule prolongée comme une laisse, l'anglais *tether* désignant la chaîne ou la corde utilisée pour attacher un animal et restreindre ses mouvements. *Dazzle, Tether* : et de cette virgule, je me dis qu'elle suggère peut-être même un rapport causal, puisqu'on pourrait penser que le second mot est en réalité l'effet du premier ; *tethered* [enchaîné-x-e] parce que *dazzled* [ébloui-x-e], rappelant le pouvoir d'emprise dont sont dotées certaines de nos illusions. Il y a aussi que *to be at the end of one's tether*, c'est être à bout de souffle, à bout de nerfs ou de ressources, comme sur le point de s'éteindre ; un néon qui grésille. Puisque c'est de lumière qu'Hélène Yamba-Guimbi se saisit pour sculpter l'espace et lui accorder une géométrie ; une grammaire d'intensités sur variateur, venue traduire ou réguler le *rollercoaster* des émotions. L'artiste rappelle la lumière au principe de son paradoxe : être d'un même coup ce qui permet le regard et, à un degré trop élevé, ce qui l'annule. Suspendus depuis 6 mètres de hauteur sous plafond, les pans de tissu sont également dotés d'une fonction ambivalente : ils sont les instruments d'une mise à distance qui a aussi pour effet de renforcer le mirage, laissant filtrer la lumière dans des aplats de résille. Ils miment ainsi la séparation, divisent l'espace sans pour autant le cloisonner et protègent d'un même coup de l'éblouissement. Parmi tous ces levers de rideaux, il me revient alors cette phrase que Barthes écrit au sujet de Brecht, après avoir assisté à la "révolution théâtrale" que fut la première française de *Mère Courage et ses enfants* au Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt à Paris, en 1954 : "le dramaturge donne à voir un aveuglement". C'est peut-être un geste similaire qu'Hélène Yamba-Guimbi met ici en scène. L'exposition

arrive après deux années passées à Los Angeles, ville qui incarne plus que toute autre cette cohabitation du *dazzling* et du *tether*, le spectacle de la célébrité et sa brutale désillusion. L'une des sculptures porte ainsi le nom de l'iconique Cecil Hotel, un immeuble art déco construit en 1924 pour accueillir les voyageuses en *business trip* débarquant à Downtown LA, et connu pour être hanté par les différents meurtres et suicides qui y ont eu lieu. Situé à dans une zone avoisinant celle de Skid Row – un des quartiers comptant le plus de personnes sans domiciles fixes des USA – le Cecil Hotel, aujourd'hui renommé "Stay on Main", se divise depuis 2011 en deux entrées : son lobby de marbre continue d'accueillir les touristes de passage ; l'autre est réservée aux habitant-es de certains étages du bâtiment, convertis en logement social.

A victory tour? L'exposition prend davantage la tournure d'un *walk down memory lane*, "détaché de la zone manucurée de ce qui fut un fantasme"³. Elle résonne aussi comme un exercice réflexif, une relecture de cette supposée *good life* optimisée à tous endroits, une vie bien "rangée" comme le sont ces boîtes muji redécoupées en maquette ou en *skyscrapers* – une existence architecturée avec son "faisceau de promesses", chaque étage étincelant de présages. Hélène Yamba-Guimbi y disperse ses images, glissant les photographies dans ces boîtes comme un album de souvenirs. On y retrouve les supports promotionnels d'une ville où l'argent pousse dans les arbres – *dollar tree* nous dit l'une des pancartes –, où les maisons s'achètent *fast cash* et le désir s'étale au sol (*I need pussy*). Nulle présence humaine dans ces paysages consommables, dans ces lieux de service sans usager-x-ère-s. Seuls semblent régner la transaction et la perte, sous un ciel d'un bleu imperturbable. *Dazzle, Tether* habille à son tour l'espace d'une scène fantomatique, faites de voilages et de veilleuses, hanté par des voix qui redoublent la lumière dans son parcours du lieu, "[une] méthode qui sonde l'espace d'un moment pour en mesurer les contours, pour demander [...] ce que cela signifierait d'être dans ce moment, puis au-delà"⁴. Trois textes se croisent, écrits par l'artiste et lus par un de ses amis : "*Saturn Returns* (le point sur tout ce qui n'existe plus) / *The Good Wills of America* (un texte sur la *good life* en soi) et *Solstice* (un texte plus tourné vers le futur et sur la reconfiguration de nos attachements pour avancer)" m'écrit Hélène par email. *Dazzle, Tether* est tendue quelque part entre ces trois dimensions. Ses ampoules alternent entre la douceur du songe et l'urgence du *wake-up call*. Elle raconte une désaffiliation post-American dream, ce grand rêve mis en pièce dont il ne reste ici qu'un petit morceau de tapis rouge ; sans pour autant lui dire un adieu tout à fait définitif. L'exposition est ainsi tramée d'allers-retours entre différentes versions, différentes options d'une même vie ; entre les lieux que l'artiste a traversés et qui l'habitent en retour. Là haut, à l'étage, on y remarquera aussi cette spirale de strass – *dazzling!* – qu'Hélène Yamba-Guimbi photographie et accroche au mur ; et glissée dans une autre des boîtes, comme une lumière au bout du tunnel, un néon rouge dessinant quatre lettres : *EXIT*.

- Salomé Burstein

¹ Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2011, p. 11. Je traduis ici.

² *op. cit.*, p.2

³ Lauren Berlant, *op. cit.*, p.29

⁴ *op. cit.*, p.35

In the blue light,

deux formes translucides gisent au sol dans une petite pièce blanche aux vitres bleutées, leur face légèrement inclinées bas au sol. Elles ne sont pas complètement objet ni complètement organique. Leur style, leur apparence et leur matériau évoquent des créatures inconnues du fond des mers ou du mobilier de science-fiction. Au centre de chaque coque creuse, une lumière blanche oscille au rythme d'une respiration diffusée par un piezo. Les souffles sont discrets, se répondent, se superposent, s'entrecroisent en boucle. Des traces de traits de coupe et le reste d'images fantômes coincées dans la matière indiquent la présence passée de la main de l'artiste.

Hélène me parle de l'origine de ces souffles sans noms ôtés de leurs corps originels. C'est une histoire de vie artistique entre deux amis et de liens déphasés, comme souvent dans son travail. En amitié, au travail comme en amour, dès lors qu'on entre en conversation avec l'autre, les vies comme les échanges peuvent s'unir et se compléter, s'opposer ou entrer en dissonance.

Je reviens aux deux gisant et je constate qu'au fil des minutes, leurs flux de respiration varient et ne se ressemblent jamais.

Selon moi cela sous-tend une énigme : comment composer une recherche basée sur les échanges et l'interaction avec le monde extérieur lorsque le futur de nos relations est invariablement contingent et fluctuant ? Un peu malice, Hélène me parle de l'intérêt qu'il peut y avoir à une relation qui s'achève ou une discussion qui arrive à sa fin pour ce que les deux agents, ayant épuisé l'ensemble des possibles, signalent ainsi que l'échange des idées a bien été effectué.

In the blue light

In a small white room with bluish windows and an oily smell, two translucent forms lay on the ground side by side, one of their edges slightly angled down to the ground. They evade hasty classification, for they are not quite manufactured or inspired by anything from the natural world. Hints of cutting marks and vague phantom images stick at the surface of the plastic material, remnants of the artist's body and touch.

At the center of each hollow shell, a white light oscillates rhythmically to a breath diffused by a piezo. The two inhale and exhale in response to each other, piling over one another in a dancing loop. The shape of the lights, their aspects, and their material call for deep sea strange creatures, or furniture straight out of a sci-fi movie set.

Hélène specifies the origin of these nameless breaths stripped of their original bodies: the tale is one of artistic kinship between two individuals and of detuned ties, a recurrent theme in her work. "In friendship, at work as in love, from the moment we enter in conversation with another, lives and exchanges can unite or complement, oppose or enter into dissonance."

Here I return to the two gisants, noticing their breathing patterns vary and never mirroring each other as minutes pass. To my eye, this and her line pose a set of enigmas. How to weave solid artistic research rooted in discussion with the outer world, when the future of our relationships—whether intimate or political—is invariably contingent and fluctuating? In a glimpse of an eye, Hélène reflects then lays a playful response. She tells me about the certain interest of a relationship coming to an end or an discussion winding up, as the two agents, having exhausted all possibilities, signals that the exchange of ideas has been successful.

Des câblages translucides partent du plafond puis deviennent opaques noirs et blancs, serpentent et relient entre elles les sculptures au sol. À différentes distances, des sphères de différents diamètres au plâtre battu sont disséminées : contre les coques vides, près des murs, derrière des portes, en tension entre elles, peut-être.

Filant sa métaphore entre liens émotifs et trame de tissu, Hélène m'explique en quoi ces sphères variables posées au sol par rapport à l'espace sont la projection la plus abstraite de ce qu'un nœud émotif formé par la tension de deux sentiments antagonistes pourrait être.

Cette projection d'un phénomène dans une forme s'adosse à la théorie des nœuds développée par le psychiatre anglais Ronald D. Laing dans son livre *Knots* (1970). Dedans, des aphorismes décrivent de courts échanges; ils se répondent et se modulent ligne par ligne en poèmes:

They are playing a game
They are playing at not playing a game
If I show them I see they are, I shall break the rules and they will punish me
I must play their game, of not seeing I see the game

La répétition, l'opposition et la modulation des différentes séquences composent ainsi une pensée analytique de ce que les rapports et communications interpersonnels sont : agonistiques et incomplets.

Cette tension exacte est ce qu'Hélène cherche à saisir dans son travail lorsqu'elle scrute les dynamiques sociales qui peuplent le monde autour d'elle et en elle avec la précision d'un bijoutier.

Transparent cablings run from the ceiling and shift from plain black and white. Intertwining along the ground, they connect the sculptures together. At various distances, globes made of beaten plaster are scattered around in relation to space: against the empty shells, next to the bare walls, behind opened doors, in tension between each other.

Drawing on the analogy between affective ties and weaving, Hélène explains how those spheres are the most abstract projection of what an emotional knot formed by the tension of two antagonistic feelings could be. This projection of a perceived phenomenon into a form is based on the knot theory developed by English psychiatrist Ronald D. Laing in his book *Knots* (1970). In it, aphorisms describe condensed exchanges between two parties, and modulate line by line as poems:

Repetition, opposition, and variation of each sequence create an analytical way of thinking about what interpersonal relationships and communications are: agonistic and incomplete. Those very tensions are what Hélène seeks to grasp as she dissects the social dynamics surrounding her with a jeweler-like precision.

Gabrielle Alnasir,
February 2024

EDUCATION

- 2023 — 2024** MA in Aesthetics and Politics
California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA
- 2018 — 2023** Master of Fine Arts in Arts with honors
Bachelor of Fine Arts in Arts
École Nationale Supérieure d'Arts de Paris, Cergy (FR)
- 2020 — 2021** Exchange year in Arts
Escuela de Bellas Artes ESMERALDA, Ciudad de México (CDMX)
- 2015 — 2017** Associate degree in Textile Design and Weaving
École Supérieure d'Arts Appliqués Duperré, Paris (FR)

EXHIBITIONS + PUBLICATIONS

upcoming:

- 2027** solo show at CRAC Alsace, France
solo show at Diez Gallery, Amsterdam, Netherlands
solo show à Boden Rader, Chicago, USA
- 2026** group show at Schiefe Zahne, Berlin, Germany
group show at Air Service Basel, Basel, Switzerland
duo show at Romance Gallery, Pittsburgh, USA
Video Killed the Radio Stars, group show at MUDAM Luxembourg, Luxembourg
- 2026** Art Dusseldorf with Kunstverein Dortmund, April 2026
- 2026** *Impermanences*, duo show with Beverly Buchanan, FRAC Lorraine, France
- 2026** *Where serpent never hisses*, Room 3557, solo show, Los Angeles
- 2025** Sorry Sun, Fondation Pernod Ricard Award, collective exhibition, Paris
- 2025** *Dazzle*, Tether, solo show, Tonus, Paris
- 2024** *Salon Tonus*, group show, Paris Internationale Art Fair, Paris
- 2023** *Inner Lights*, solo show, Neuvitech, Paris
- 2023** *Copy Machine Manifestos*, group show, Brooklyn Museum, New York
- 2023** *The more i throw away the more i'll find*, group show, Cité Montmartre aux Artistes, Paris
- 2023**, *Lessness*, independent publication, Paris
- 2022** *Pump-up zine*, group publication with David Douard
- 2017** *Loose Ground*, group show, Duperré, Paris

TEACHING & ASSISTING

- 2024 — 2023** Teaching Assistant
- Teach a writing composition section as an *Introduction to Critical Studies*
 - Teach a writing composition section about *Feminist Poetics*
 - Teach a writing composition section about *Revolutions in America*
- 2021** California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, USA
- Production Assistant of David Cousinard, metalworker
Paris, FR
- 2020** Production Assistant of Yann Gerstberger, artist
Ciudad de México, Mexico
- 2019** Production Assistant of Xavier Antin, artist
- Provided extensive assistance to the artist in the conceptualization, planning, and production of three exhibitions :
- The Weavers, CAC Brétigny
Vanishing Workflows, ALOFT at Hermès, Singapore
La dépense, avec témoins, Crèvecoeur Marseille

READINGS

- 2026** MUDAM Luxembourg
2026 Frac Lorraine
2023 Centre International de la Poésie de Marseille

GRANTS & PRIZES

- 2025** Acquisition in the permanent collection, Centre Georges Pompidou
2025 Nouveau Programme Award, Fondation Pernod Ricard Award
2024 Travel grant, Association Trampoline
2024 Residency grant, California Institute of the Art
2024 Student Development Grant, California Institute of the Art
2023 Finalist, Fulbright U.S. Graduate Program
2023 Graduate Student Merit Scholarship, California Institute of the Art
2020 Travel grant, Région Île-de-France

RESIDENCIES

- 2025** High Desert Test Site Work/Trade Residency, Joshua Tree, CA
2024 SOMA SUMMER, Ciudad de Mexico, Mexico
2023 Centre International de la Poésie de Marseille, Marseille, France
2021 Slow Reading Club workshop with Bryanna Fritz and Henry Andersen, ENSAPC, Cergy
2020 Hands on Critique with Gabriel Kuri, ENSAPC, Cergy
2020 Arc Lire dans les choses with Federico Nicolao, Porquerolles, France

