

Edouard Malingue Gallery  
馬凌畫廊

Opening Hours  
Monday to Saturday  
10AM–7PM

Exhibition  
'Sneakerotics: Further materials for a theory of the young-girl'  
Curated by Robin Peckham  
First Floor, 8 Queen's Road  
Central, Hong Kong

Dates  
August 28 – September 30, 2013

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Modern Hong Kong nightlife began with the California Restaurant in 1983. It then expanded to fill the neighbourhood surrounding the California Tower. The karaoke scene was dominated by California Red until it was finally acquired by a competitor in 2010. The soundtrack to Wong Kar Wai's *Chungking Express* famously includes "California Dreaming". Suburban gated community Palm Springs (California Garden in Chinese) is oriented around the main thoroughfare of Santa Monica Avenue. California Beach Club offers sunless tanning. California Fitness is a subsidiary of 24 Hour Fitness, itself headquartered in San Ramon, California.

A recent analysis of "Missed Connections"<sup>1</sup> data suggested that 24 Hour Fitness is the most common location for such tragicomic classifieds in the state of California. Back in Hong Kong, the major BBS HKGolden includes a sub-forum dedicated to how-to guides posted on picking up women—namely the underemployed and, needless to say, highly coveted mistresses of powerful businessmen kept in luxury apartments—in the gyms of a certain residential complex that, incidentally, happens to be at the centre of the city's under-construction cultural district.

The exhibition "Sneakerotics" proposes a position with regard to the parallel life of the California dream in Hong Kong: fitness, as an aesthetic category, becomes a site of investigation for the circulation of imagery and desire. California is, in Asia, best represented not by the freeways, canyons, surf breaks, palm trees, and Hollywood signs that define it in the American imagination, but rather by specific visual cultures like the gym and the parking lot. Both are runways for the display of bodies, perhaps not unlike the gallery space of Central Hong Kong. Projects in this exhibition often touch on the connection between fitness and sexuality, and on how this culturally specific relationship might be warped and reconfigured through artistic practice.

While earlier corporate visions of Hong Kong's California were tied to marketing initiatives, it is now the internet that has become the cultural sphere in which we can imagine the most interaction between these two categories of places. Net culture allows for a space in which imagery from, say, Los Angeles and Hong Kong could mix without anyone really knowing or caring where it comes from—even if there is a reductive geographic specificity to the generic imaginary that moves back and forth between these two poles. Here the global spread and transformation of an imagined "California lifestyle" is about yoga, spandex, smoothies, sneakers, spinning, and aerobics; this is a distributed imagination of a centre without a centre.

As an exhibition, this proposal derives in part from the theoretical treatise "Preliminary Materials for a Theory of the Young-Girl" authored by the radical French collective Tiqqun. Although this text was originally intended to function as something of an analytical manifesto of the subjectification of the postpostmodern consumer, in reality it is perhaps most useful as a series of poetic statements that romanticise the position of the young-girl as much as they critique it: "The young-girl resembles her photo." "The tomboy is indispensable as a kind of modernity." "Youth and Femininity, hypostatized, abstract, and recoded into youthitude and feminitude, are then elevated to the rank of ideal regulators of empire-citizen integration, and the figure of the Young-Girl thus realises an immediate, spontaneous, and perfectly desirable unity between those two variables." If nothing else, Los Angeles and Hong Kong are perhaps the two hemispheric poles of this culture, and the gyms are their temples.

Specific projects in the exhibition approach the digital mapping of the body, Skechers, stock imagery, neon, life after Hollywood, best practices in cosmetics before and after the workout, exhaustion and materiality, slang, youth and femininity in the consumerist matrix of late capitalism, hydration strategies, exercise

soundtracks, Usain Bolt, and heavy lifting. With contributions from Body by Body, Petra Cortright, Sterling Crispin, Lauren Elder, Jeremy Everett, Gentleman Scholar, Niko Karamyan and Tierney Finster, Spencer Longo, Nguzunguzu, Anna Rosen, Maha Saab, Vincent Szarek, Tiqqun, and Clarissa Tossin.

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**Robin Peckham**

Robin Peckham is an independent curator, editor, and art advisor currently based in Hong Kong. His writing and translation is published in *Artforum*, *Yishu*, *LEAP*, and the *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, while recent publications include books on video art pioneer Zhang Peili and architectural interventionists MAP Office. Current research interests lie in post-internet object cultures, casualist abstraction, and accelerationism.

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**Anna Rosen (b. 1984, Virginia)**

Like several of these artists, Rosen works in both cloth and concrete, a surprisingly dominating mix. Specifically, she makes paintings using the physical remains of sneakers, which are sometimes also incorporated into her concrete sculptures.

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**Body by Body (Melissa Sachs and Cameron Soren)**

Body by Body is not an artistic collective, but rather a "band" that makes art work instead of music. Melissa and Cameron started working together on a whim, and have since extended their practice to a range of digital-centric ways of working. They are included here for a series of photographs in which they take the "body" aspect of their name literally, shooting men working out while looking at their paintings.

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**Clarrisa Tossin**

Tossin aims to reveal and unsettle the invisible supporting structures of urban life, capital, and modernity. A key work of hers is the plaster casts of the interior of used sneakers. The wear and tear of each sneaker is merged with brand signifiers such as subtly recognisable stitch patterns and rivets. Having studied at Fundação Armando Álvares Penteado in São Paulo and at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, she completed in 2012 a two-year residency in the Core Program at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Tossin has been selected by curator Hou Hanru to be an International Artist-in- Residence at ArtPace San Antonio from May to July 2013. Her work is included in the collection of The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

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**Gentleman Scholar**

Gentleman Scholar is a LA-based design firm specialising in digital narratives for major corporate clients like Visa. They recently produced a special neon "Seapunk" style font for the opening and closing credits of Harmony Korine's film Spring Breakers. A potential project could involve recycling this font for other purposes in collaboration with artists, or crafting an actual neon sign out of the digital imagery.

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**Jeremy Everett (b. 1979, Colorado)**

Jeremy often works with transient materials, particularly favouring wax and other combustible matter. His best known work involves the crystallisation or "flooding" of his entire library, including a set of pornographic magazines. This re- aestheticisation of sexuality is important here, as if the body itself is not yet beautiful enough.

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**Lauren Elder (b. 1990, Los Angeles)**

Lauren's work for the last two years has revolved around recreating imagery. Relevant to this project, she has been creating ceramic casts of sneaker bottoms with logos intact, as well as concrete bicycle helmets and other sportswear. She is interested in the construction of virtual realities as spaces of fantasy, particularly in their physical embodiment.

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**Maha Saab (b. 1979, USA)**

Maha Saab is interested in creating plays between objects in space which function as counterpoints for movement and the enigmatic state of imagination to be both intrinsically visualised and opaque. Saab' s photographs, sculptures and drawings

incorporate a wide range of global identities that alter mental and physical space. What constitutes the formal and sophisticated is questioned through the drawn upon treatment of surface, shape and imagery. Within all the works, details of social prose are deconstructed down to uncanny poetics.

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**Nguzunguzu (Asma Maroof and Daniel Pineda)**

Nguzunguzu is an electronic music production outfit that has been involved with an increasing number of art world collaborations, including DIS Magazine, Wu Tsang, and others. The music is so diverse it is almost a parody of globalism, involving Latin American influences, lots of bass, and a touch of reggaeton.

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**Petra Cotright (b. 1986, Santa Barbara)**

Cotright is one of the leading figures in net art, especially in terms of online video and animated GIFs. She has also been at the fore of post-internet work, bringing net art into physical, sculptural space. Here, her project would involve the palm tree printed banners along with their digitally manipulated photo shoots.

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**Spencer Longo (b. 1986, New Hampshire)**

Longo is another artist working with collaged found imagery and the idea of image circulation on the internet, with particular reference to Hollywood aesthetics. The perfect fit for this show is his set of sculptures produced from bikini bathing suits (only a step away from gym wear) and athletic water bottles. He is also a major contributor to The Jogging.

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**Sterling Crispin (b. 1985, Hawaii)**

Crispin is yet another artist with the bulk of his production housed on the internet. He directed the production of a line of t-shirts designed by net artists, and has recently been working on a series of DJ mixes and textual manuals related to digital enlightenment. His alignment of a spiritual sublime with technological culture is significant with respect to ideas of embodiment and perfection.

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**Vincent Szarek (b. 1973, Rhode Island)**

Szarek's work reveals a myriad of influences from custom car culture, and minimalist finish fetishism, to monochrome abstraction. These influences are a result of his unique background. While attending RISD, Szarek worked at an automotive body shop where he was exposed to car culture. At the auto body shop, engrossed by the labor intensive finishes, saturated colour, and smooth surfaces, Szarek learned first hand to seamlessly incorporate materials and fabrication processes associated with cars and surfboards into his art practice.

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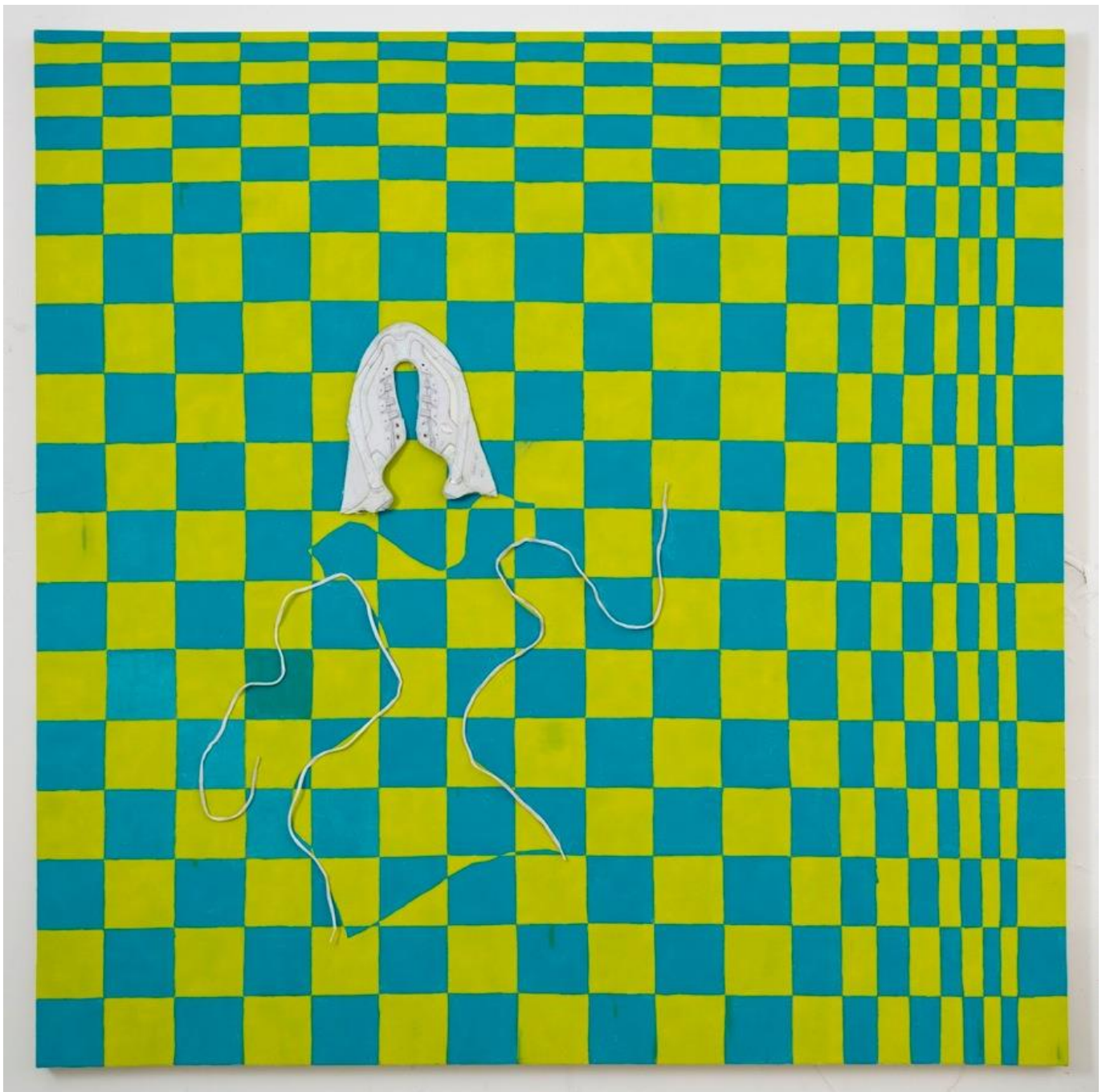


Anna Rosen  
*Biodome*, 2013  
Oil, acrylic, Skechers, shake-ups on canvas  
178 x 163 cm





Anna Rosen  
*Bootylicious Encounters*, 2013,  
Oil, acrylic, Skechers, shake-ups on canvas  
132 x 132 cm



Anna Rosen  
*Discotheque*, 2013  
Oil, acrylic, Skechers, shake-ups on canvas  
152 x 152 cm



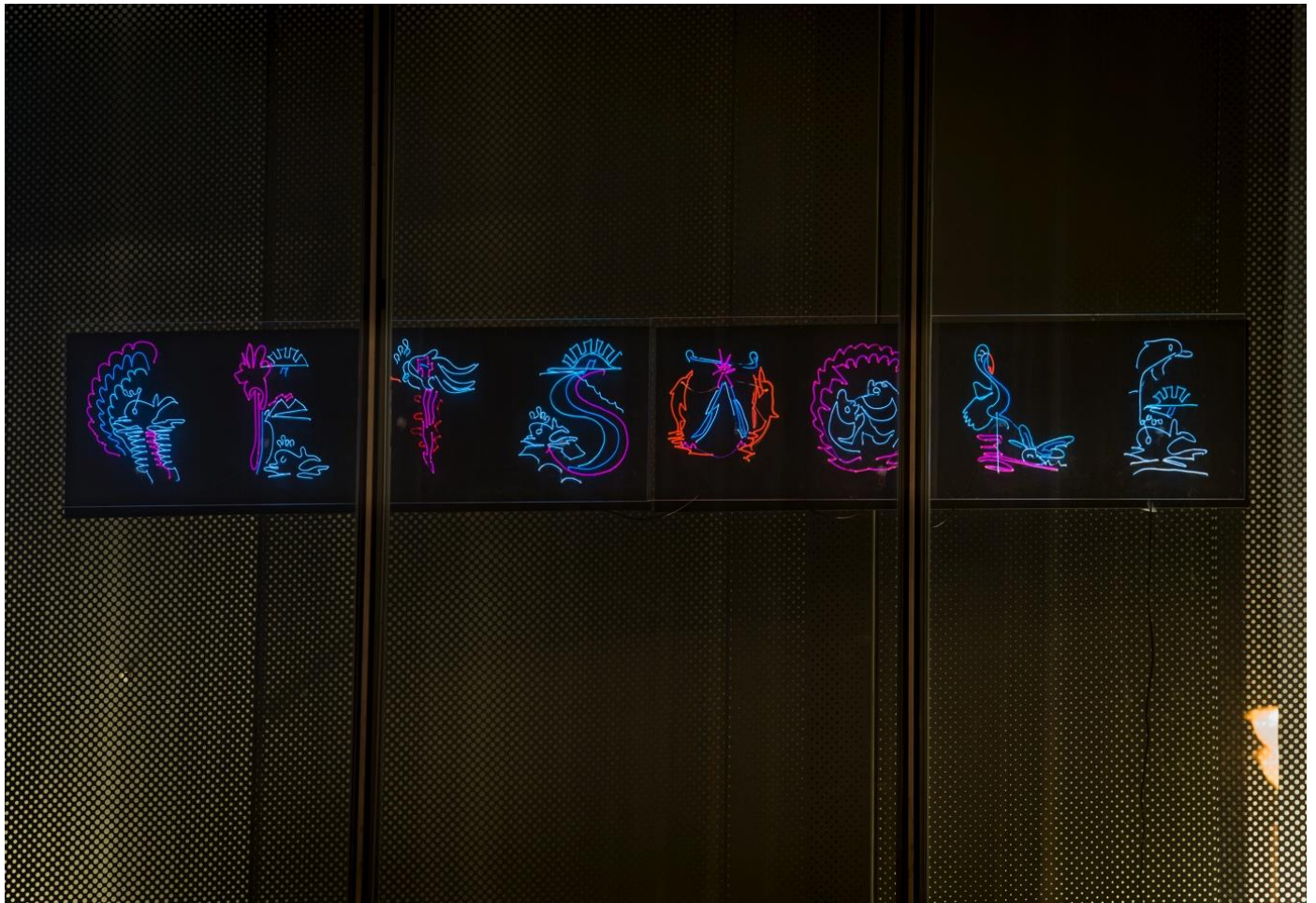


Body by Body  
*Angel Bodybuilder*, 2013  
Carpet, diameter: 120 cm





Clarissa Tossin  
*Converse*, 2009  
Fabric, rivets, shoes laces



Gentleman Scholar  
*GET SWOLE*, 2013  
Typography and EL wire  
284.5 (W) x 45.7 (H) x 10.2 (D) cm



Jeremy Everett  
*Centerfold*, 2013  
Crystallized porn magazine, 42 (L) x 13.5 (W) x 22 (H) cm

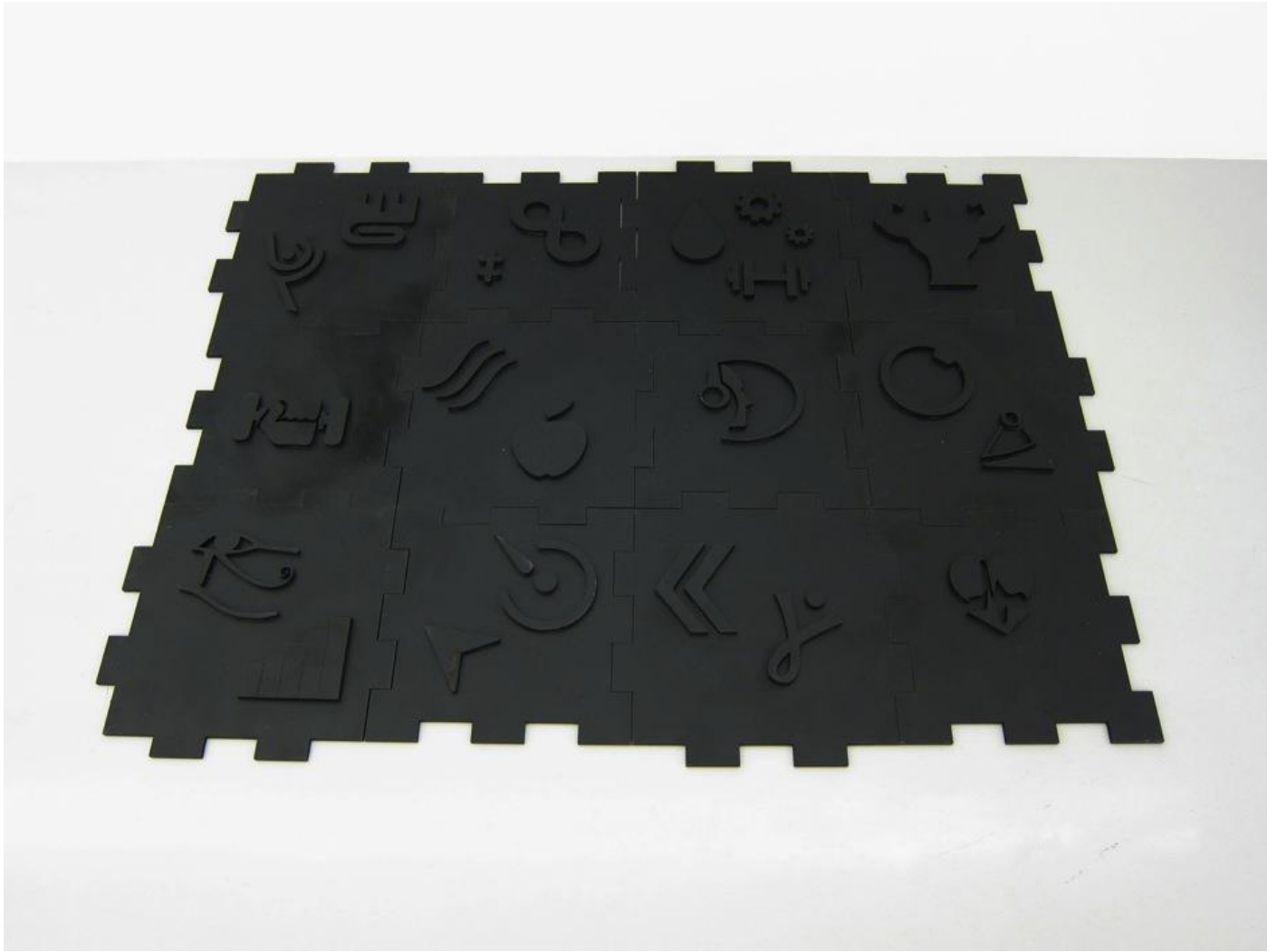


Jeremy Everett  
*Hustler*, 2013  
 Crystallized porn magazine  
 29.5 (L) x 20 (W) x 5 (H) cm



Jeremy Everett  
*Centerfold*, 2013  
 Crystallized porn magazine  
 42 (L) x 13.5 (W) x 22 (H) cm

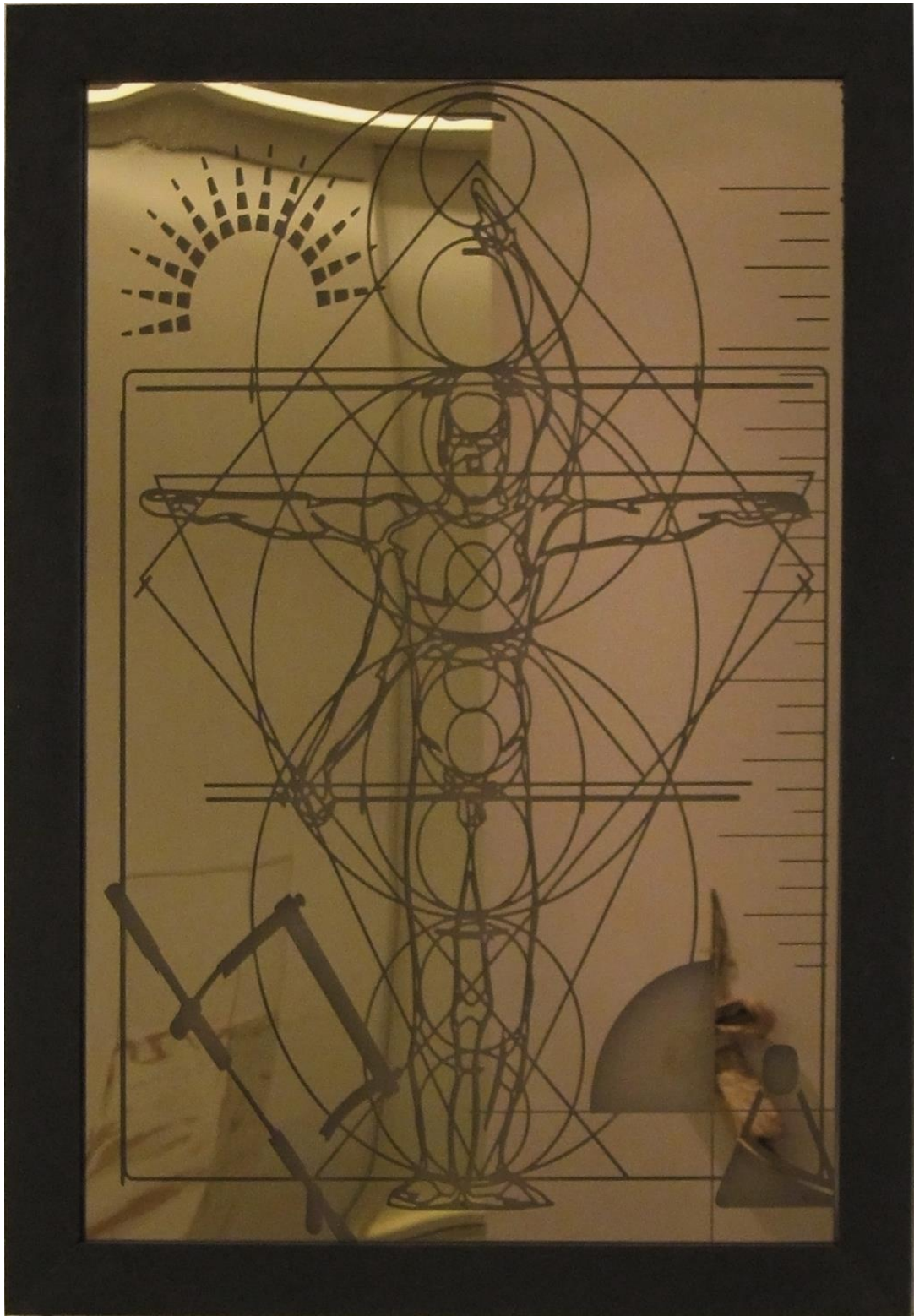




Lauren Elder  
*Dominion*, 2013  
 Synthetic rubber coating, MDF  
 97 x 127 cm



Lauren Elder  
*Power*, 2013  
Casting polyurethane foam, concrete  
43 x 18 x 36 cm



Lauren Elder  
*Manual and Fitness Guide*, 2013  
Mirrored acrylic, pine wood  
66 x 46 cm

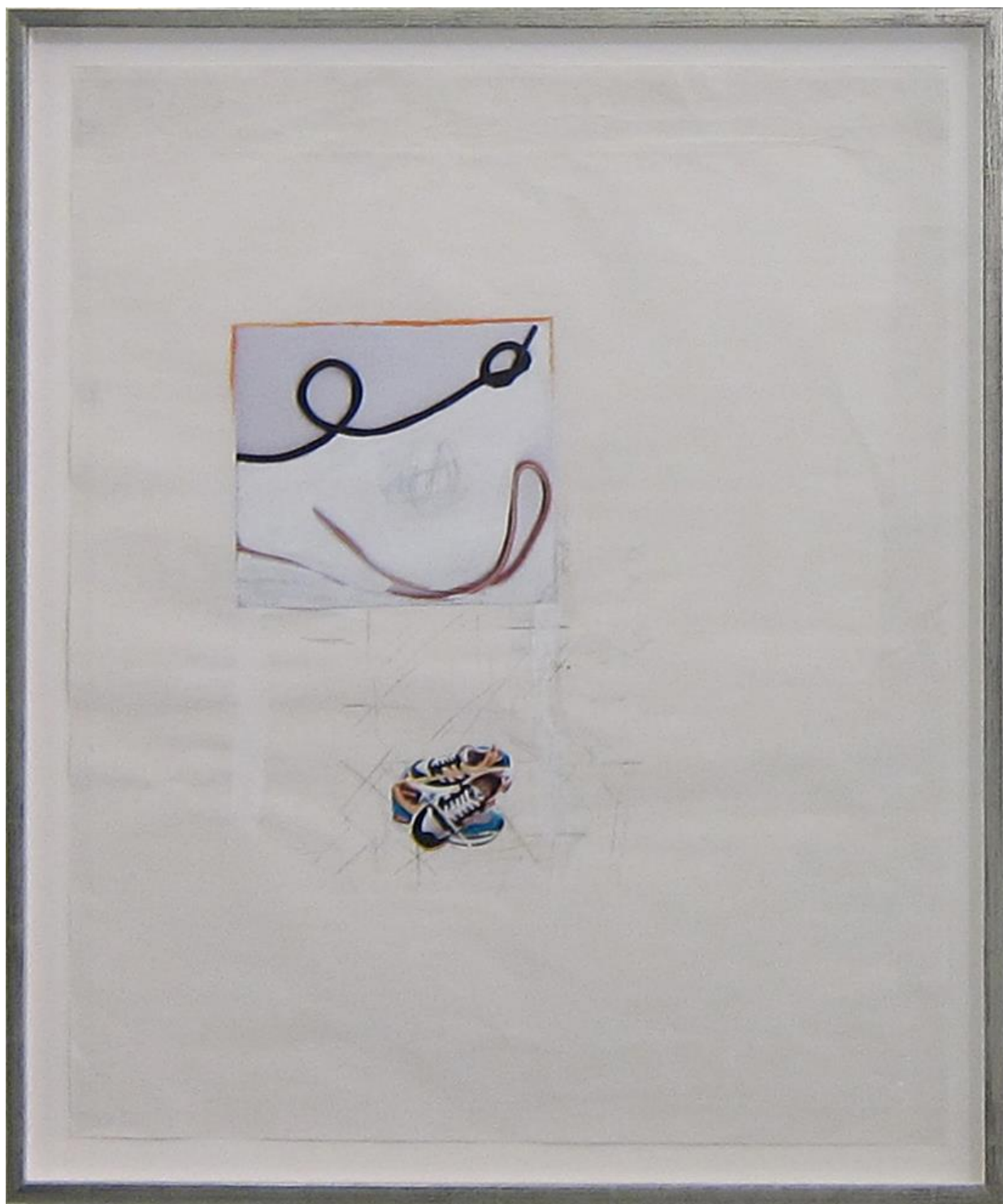


Maha Saab  
*Gold Girl Puma*, 2008  
Collage, acrylic, pencil ink on paper  
90 x 64 cm





Maha Saab  
*Ivory Coast*, 2008  
Paint, watercolour, collage on panel  
25 x 26 cm



Maha Saab  
*Run Palace*, 2008  
Collage, acrylic, pencil ink on paper  
77 x 64 cm



Maha Saab  
*Constellation Prize*, 2008  
 Photograph, acrylic on wood panel  
 25 x 26 cm



Maha Saab  
*Night*, 2013  
 Felt, collage, enamel, acrylic, watercolour on panel  
 25 x 26 cm

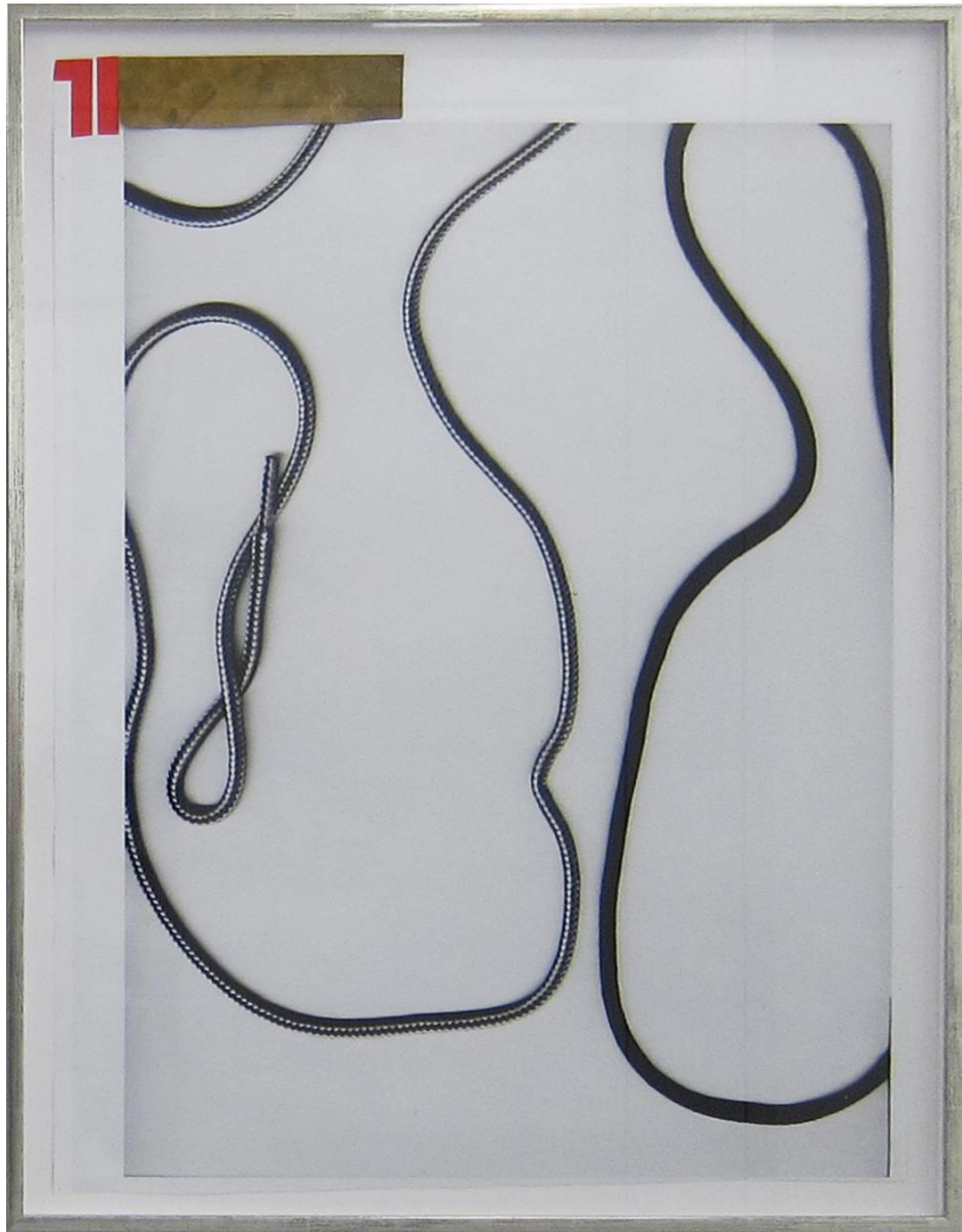


Maha Saab  
*Untitled (Royal Run)*, 2013  
 Ink, acrylic, enamel on copper mounted on panel  
 25 x 26 cm



Maha Saab  
*Untitled (To Scale)*, 2013  
 Acrylic, enamel on copper mounted on panel  
 25 x 26 cm





Maha Saab  
*Photo Together*, 2008-2013,  
Copper, tape, lightjet print  
97 x 74 cm



Petra Cortright  
*Night Heat 3*, 2011  
Digital print on silk  
184.2 x 129.5 cm



Spencer Longo  
*Title Forthcoming*, 2013  
Reflexology mats, Herbalife 24 Formula 1



Sterling Crispin  
*Territory*(Set of 3), 2013  
Digital holographic media  
30.5 x 30.5 cm each





Vincent Szarek  
*90 lbs* (Set of 2), 2013  
Urethane on cast iron, diameter: 45 cm

## Installation views





