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PABLO DAVILA

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In his multidisciplinary works, Pablo Dávila (b. 1983, Mexico City) takes as a starting point the traditional artistic media to question how they reflect the social construction of space and time. In his installations, the artist excavates a space for interference and ambiguity through forms both pared-down and rich with an immediate sensorial experience.

His practice explores sentience and subjectivity through investigations in perception, space and time consciousness. His practice takes many shapes-- encompassing video, electronics, light installation, photography, conceptual painting and site-specific interventions. His work traverses the space in between sensory perception and cognitive understanding. His poetic gestures trigger a questioning of our expectations in dealing with the passing of time, and the psychological lens with which we process events in our memory.

His work is informed by science, music, poetry, cognitive sciences and physical phenomena, so as to delve into notions of perception, the fleeting nature of time and historical interpretations.

PABLO DÁVILA

1983 in Mexico City. Lives and works in Mexico City.

Education

Vancouver Film School, Vancouver, British Columbia, CA

Solo Exhibitions

2023 Time Moves In One Direction, Memory In Another, MAH Genève, Switzerland

2023 It Comes Out Of Thin Air, Spreads, Shifts, Becomes Something Else, Galeria OMR, Mexico

2022 Please call if anything's unclear, THE PILL, Istanbul, TR

2020 But The Subject Is A Long One, Salón ACME, Mexico City, MX

2019 Senza Replica, josegarcia.mx, Mérida, MX

2018 No title required, josegarcia.mx, Mérida, MX

2017 C,O,N,T,I,N,U,O C-O-N-E-C-T-A-D-O, Travesía Cuatro, Guadalajara, MX

2016 Available Light (Nubra), FF Projects, San Pedro Garza García, MX

All The Horses Share The Same Color, FF Projects, San Pedro Garza García, MX

Ladies & Gentlemen, We Are Floating In Space, CULT Aimee Friberg Exhibitions, San Francisco, US

2014 Time Moves In One Direction, Memory In Another, FF Projects, Monterrey, MX

Group Exhibitions

2022 Aichi Triennale, Aichi, Japan

Form Follows Energy, OMR – LAGO / ALGO, Mexico City, MX

INDEX, Museo Marco, Monterrey, MX

2020 OTRXS MUNDXS, Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, MX

Instantanea, Guadalajara, MX

Recover/Uncover, MASA Galeria, Mexico City, MX

2018 Cycles of collapsing progress, Rashid Karami Fair, Tripoli, LB

10 minutes after the show, josegarcia.mx, Mérida, MX

Almost Solid Light: New Work from Mexico, Paul Kasmin Gallery, NY, US

Residencies

2016 Atlantic Center for the Arts, Florida, US

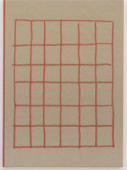
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WORKS AND EXHIBITIONS

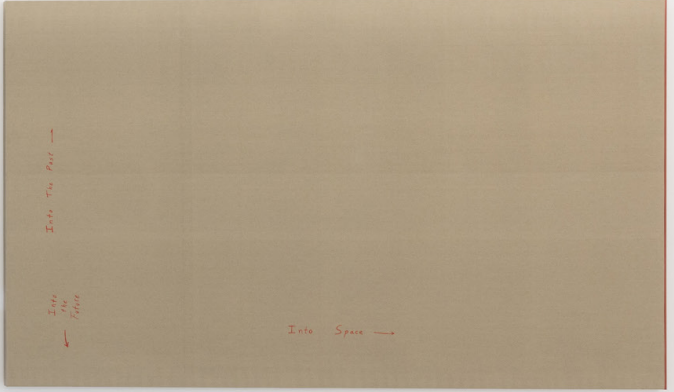
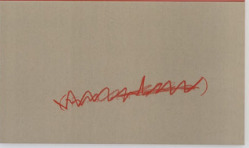




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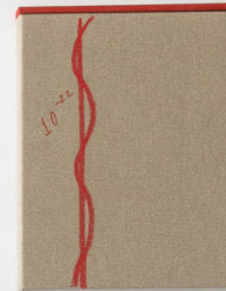






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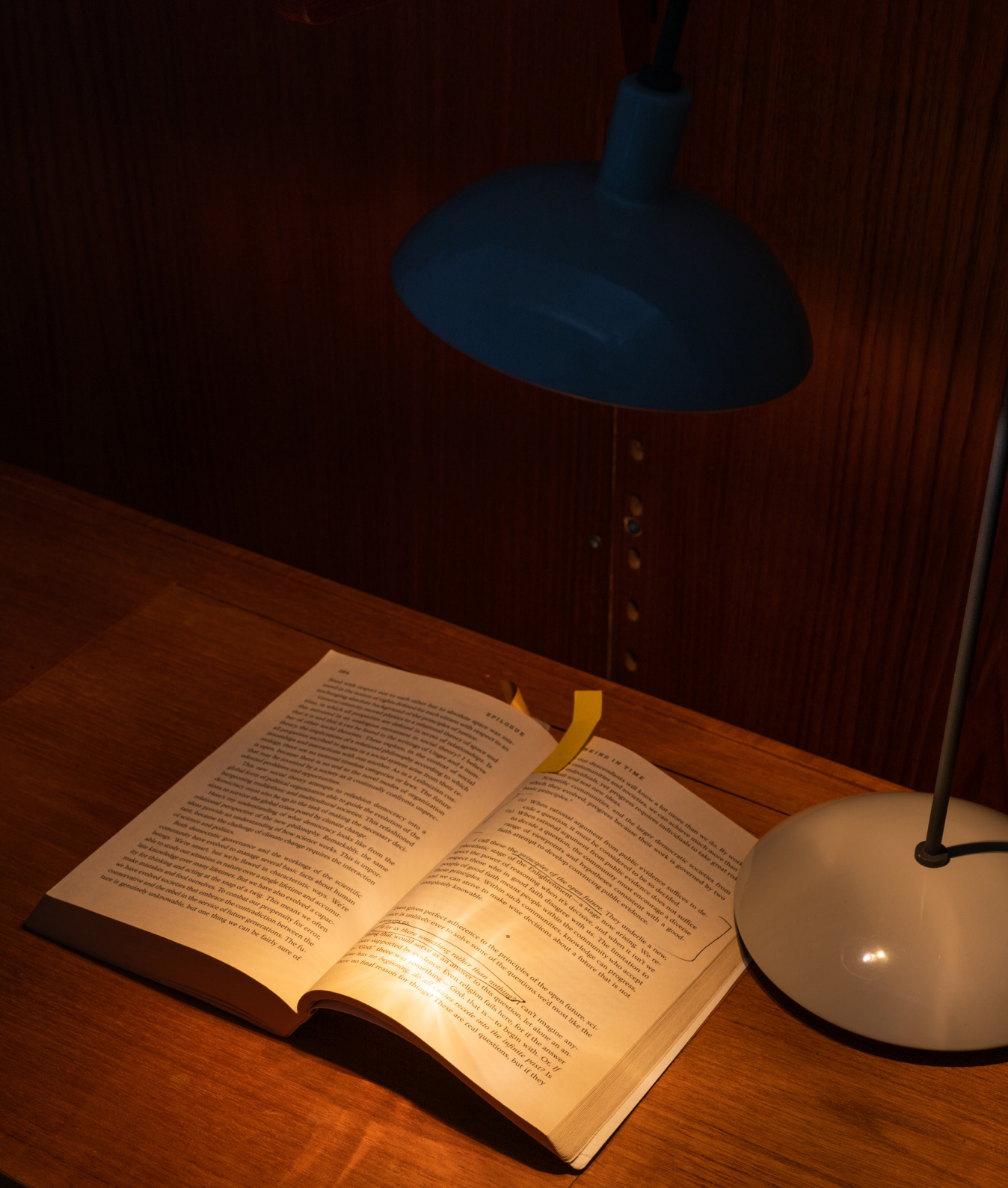
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Quantum
Physics

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original w/o cutting
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Exhibition view, *Please call if anything's unclear*, THE PILL, Istanbul, 2022.







Pablo Davila
Stories of nearly everything, 2022
Obsidians
150 cm





In the preface to his only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, published in 1890, Oscar Wilde proclaimed that “all art is quite useless”. Intrigued by the statement, Oxford student Bernulf Clegg wrote him a letter asking him for more details regarding that declaration. Wilde responded with a letter where he included some of his thoughts revolving around the function and the futility of art.

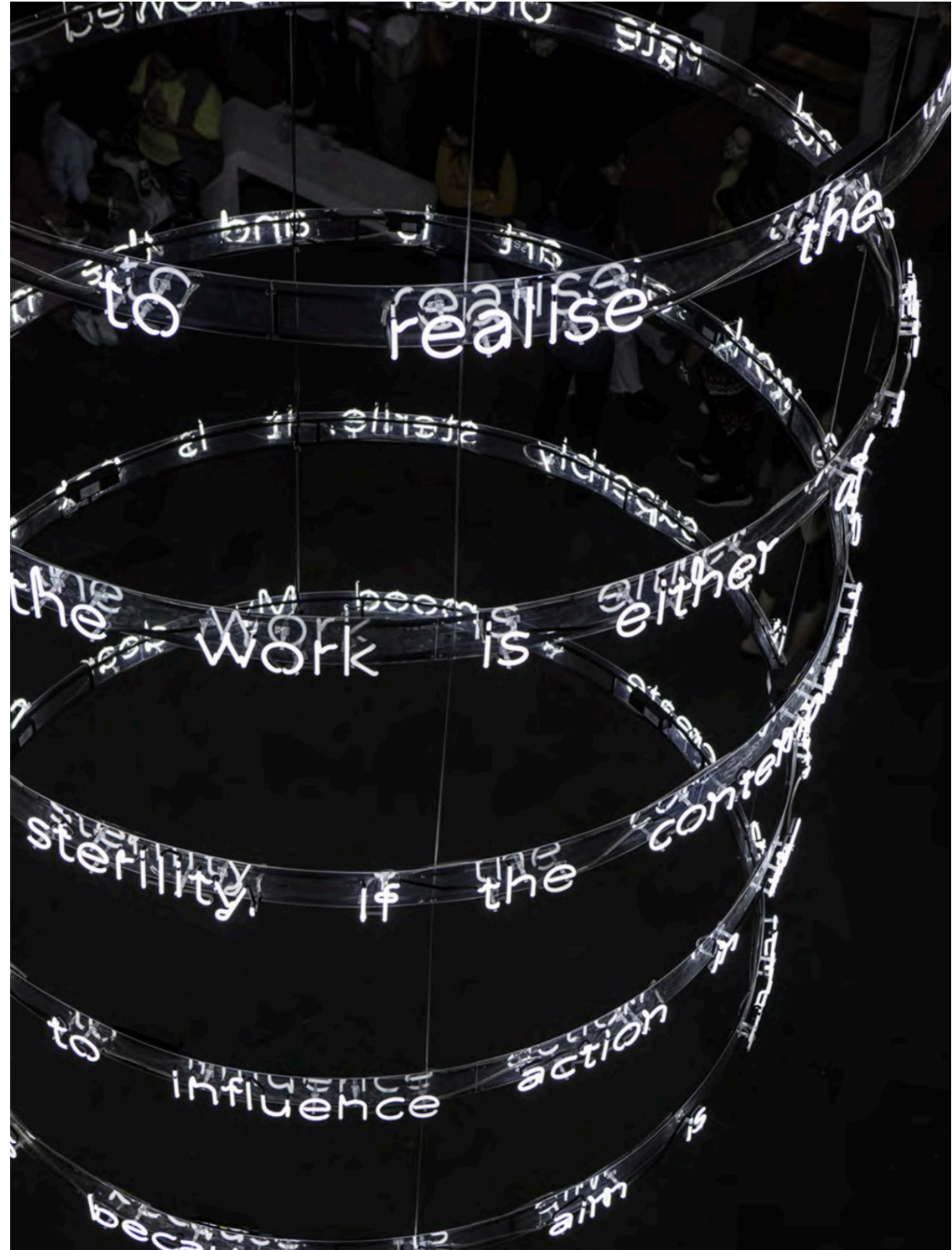
But The Subject Is A Long One is a textbased light installation featuring the letter Oscar Wilde would write to Bernulf Clegg. The text is only revealed when walking around the work, as due to its dimensions and materials, the light and the text are transformed into space. Likewise, the spatiality transcends the realm of physicality, when becoming a testimony of the correspondence established by these two characters and that would continue for a few years. The text also reflects on a specific context held within the XIX century decay; a generalized skepticism that would permeate every sort of artistic expression.





Taking as a standpoint Wilde's letter, a concrete poem of sorts was created featuring quotes by other writers, theorists, poets and artists, who would also think of art as rather useless space. The poem, which is a text with no beginning and no end, contains quotes by John Ruskin, Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, Marcel Duchamp, William Morris, Groucho Marx, Anish Kapoor, Michael Smith, John Everett Millais, Walter Benjamin, Ben Vautier and other authors. This investigation is an attempt to continue Wilde's letter in different contexts and epochs and keep the correspondence with Wilde. After all, the letter's final sentence is "But the subject is a long one"

Pablo Davila
But The Subject Is A Long One, 2020
Neon
3 x 12 m







“Time moves in one direction, memory in another.

We are that strange species that constructs artifacts intended to counter the natural flow of forgetting.”

William Gibson, Dead man speaks

Pablo Dávila explores sentience and subjectivity through investigations in perception, space and time consciousness. His practice takes many shapes-- encompassing video, electronics, light installation, photography, conceptual painting and site-specific interventions. Utilizing a minimalist reductive approach, Dávila traverses the space in between sensory perception and cognitive understanding. His poetic gestures trigger a questioning of our expectations in dealing with the passing of time, and the psychological lens with which we process events in our memory. On the occasion of his solo Show, the artist is showing a new body of Works including site-specific works, sculptures and paintings. Pablo Dávila has extensively exhibited worldwide. His works have been exhibited at José García (Ciudad de México, Mexico); Paul Kasmin gallery (New York, USA); Travesía Cuatro (Guadalajara, México) ; FIFI Projects (Monterrey y Ciudad de México, México); Sala Juárez (Guadalajara, México); Cult Exhibitions (San Francisco CA, USA); Salón ACME (Ciudad de México, México); Museo de la ciudadde mexico (Mexico city, México); Cycles of Collapsing Progress curated by Anissa Touati & Karina El Hanou (Tripoli, Lebanon). He participated in the artists-in-residence program at the Atlantic Center for the Arts with Josiah McElheny (Florida,

USA). Dávila holds a film degree from Vancouver Film School in Vancouver, British Columbia (Canada). He lives and works in Mexico City.

“I sometimes think that nothing really is new; that the first pixels were particles of ochre clay, the bison rendered in just the resolution required. The bison still function perfectly, all these millennia later, and what screen in the world today shall we say that of in a decade? And yet the bison will be there for us, on whatever screens we have, carried out of the primal dark on some impulse we each have felt, as children, drawing. But carried nonetheless on this thing we have always been creating, this vast unlikely mechanism that carries memory in its interstices; this global, communal, prosthetic memory that we have been building since before we learned to build.

When we turn on the radio in a New York hotel room and hear Elvis singing “Heartbreak Hotel”, we are seldom struck by the peculiarity of our situation: that a dead man sings.

In the context of the longer life of the species, it is something that only just changed a moment ago. It is something new, and I sometimes feel that, yes, everything has changed. (This perpetual toggling between nothing being new, under the sun, and everything having very recently changed, absolutely, is perhaps the central driving tension of my work.)



Our “now” has become at once more unforgivingly brief and unprecedentedly elastic. The half-life of media-product grows shorter still, ‘til it threatens to vanish altogether, everting into some weird quantum logic of its own, the Warholian Fifteen Minutes becoming a quark-like blink. Yet once admitted to the culture’s consensus-pantheon, certain things seem destined to be with us for a very long time indeed. This is a function, in large part, of the rewind button. And we would all of us, to some extent, wish to be in heavy rotation.

And as this capacity for recall (and recommodification) grows more universal, history itself is seen to be even more obviously a construct, subject to revision. If it has been our business, as a species, to dam the flow of time through the creation and maintenance of mechanisms of external memory, what will we become when all these mechanisms, as they now seem intended ultimately to do, merge?

The end-point of human culture may well be a single moment of effectively endless duration, an infinite digital Now. But then, again, perhaps there is nothing new, in the end of all our beginnings, and the bison will be there, waiting for us.”

William Gibson, *Dead man speaks*





Pablo Davila

288-1) Senza Replica

Yamaha disclavier Piano, Midi system, custom made computer coding



Pablo Davila
FROM ME FLOWS WHAT YOU CALLTIME, 2019
Music score sheet of Toru Takemitsu's 'from me flows what you
call time' and charcoal







Pablo Davila
Phase Painting, 2019
Perforated canvas
130 x 100 cm

Phase paintings (The natural flow of forgetting) is a series that delves into the notions of time and movement, or rather, movement in time. Every painting depicts two instances that when overlapped and translated into visual terms generate a third moment of difference, interference and disruption. The discrepancy of the image is no other than the visibility of the passing of time, and along with it, the memory, perception and the trace that leaves behind. The image evidences both the presence and the absence of a representation within the span of a second.

Pablo Davila explores sentience and subjectivity by investigating perception, space and time consciousness. His practice takes many shapes - encompassing video, electronics, light installation, photography, conceptual painting and site-specific interventions. Recurring to a minimalist reductive approach, Dávila traverses the space in between sensory perception and cognitive understanding. His poetic gestures trigger a questioning of our expectations in dealing with the passing of time, and the psychological lens with which we process events in our memory.



Pablo Davila
Phase Painting, 2019
Perforated canvas
130 x 100 cm







Rhythmic Field

... And that question is this: when we look around the world, as scientists have done for the last hundred years, there appear to be about 20 numbers that really describe our universe. These are numbers like the mass of the particles, like electrons and quarks, the strength of gravity, the strength of the electromagnetic force — a list of about 20 numbers that have been measured with incredible precision, but nobody has an explanation for why the numbers have the particular values that they do. And the wonderful thing is, if I had 20 dials up here and I let you come up and fiddle with those numbers, almost any fiddling makes the universe disappear.

Brian Greene

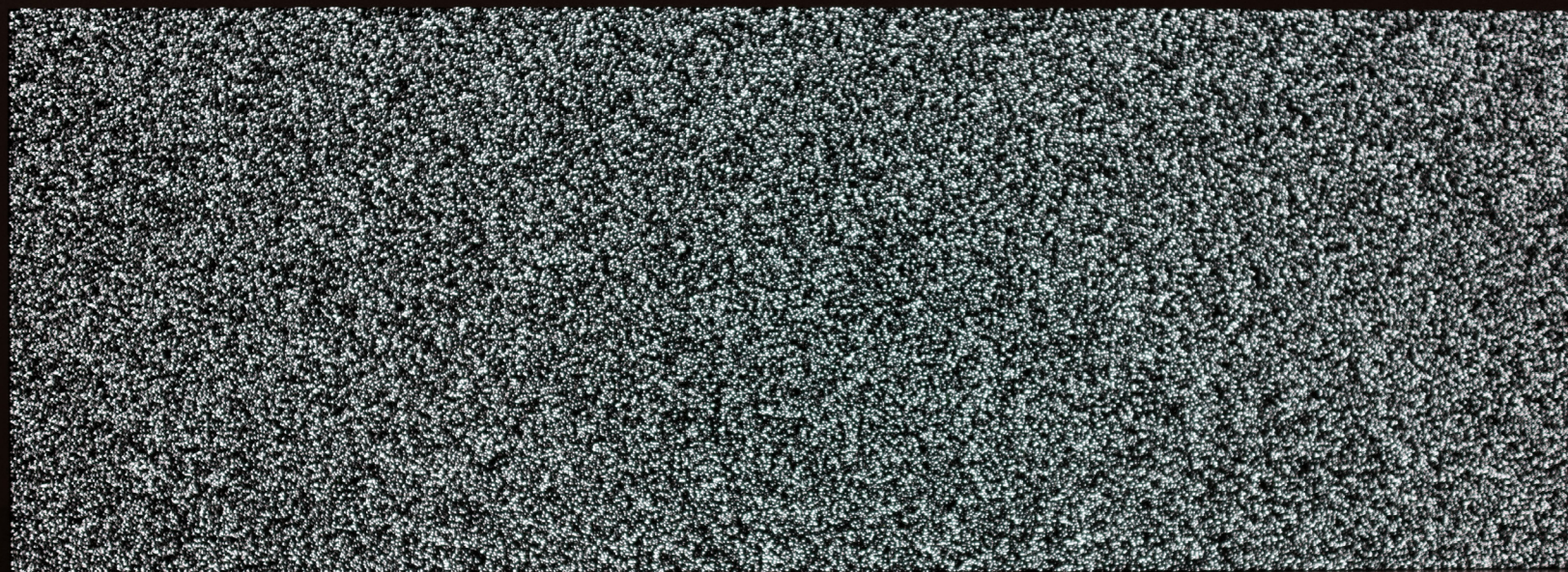


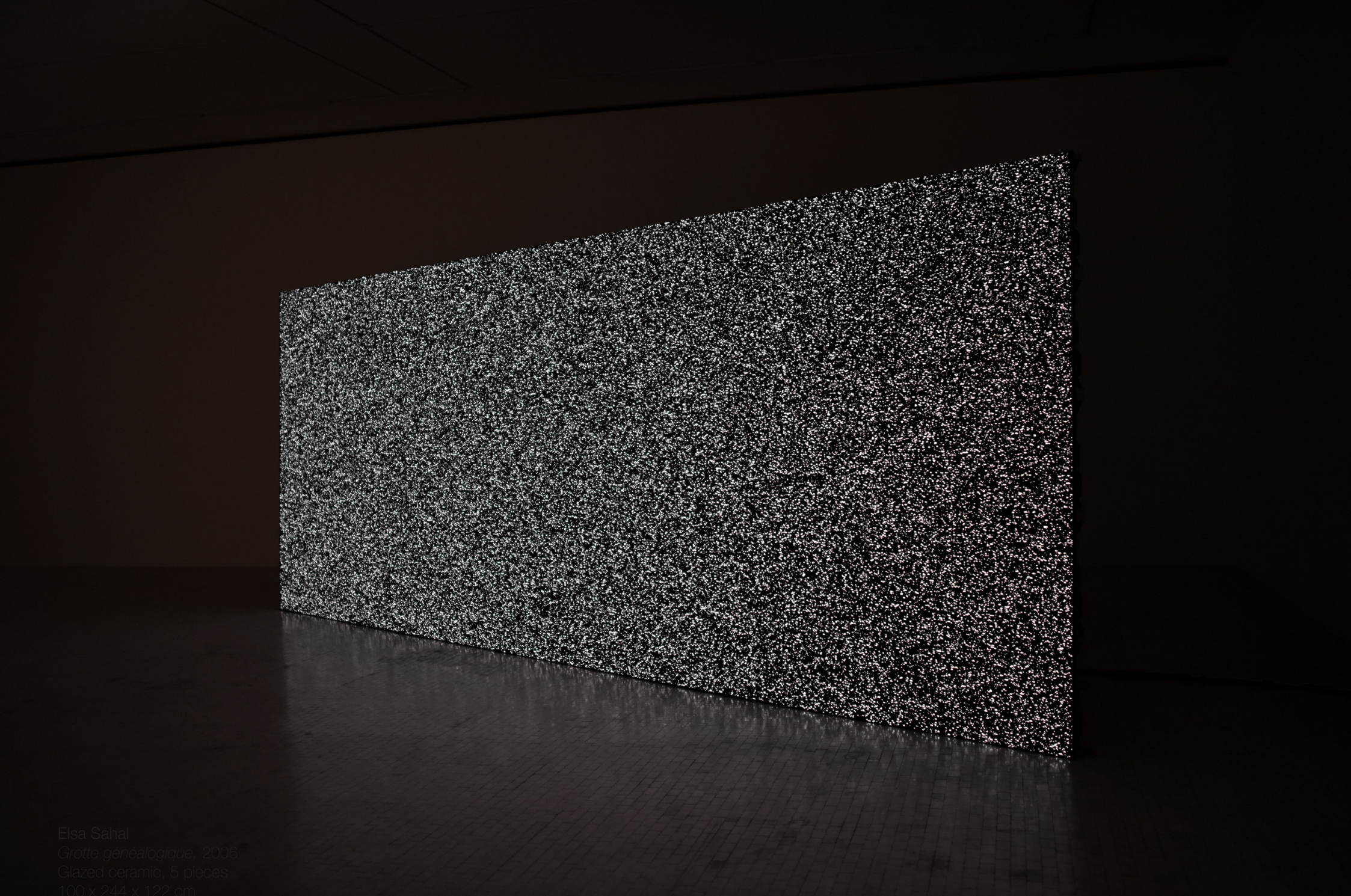


These 20 numbers set the rules for our universe, and within these set of rules there are (close to) infinite combinations, if we would look to the tiniest of the tiniest particles in our universe, we would find individual strings that vibrate in different frequencies and forms that combined with others eventually form our universe. Every single thing is made up of the combination of different rhythms, every person and every thing we know has its own set of rules, characteristics and clocks, societies, cities, planets etc. are formed with these individual "clocks", ... we are the result of millions and millions of combinations.

In this work, the 20 metronomes that rest on top of a mirror, are set ticking at their slowest setting (40bpm), set in motion randomly, generating a soundscape that will eventually end everyday, and then set again in a completely different pattern than the previous one based on chance timing and certain individual decisions, thus the infinite combinations of rhythmic patterns are set in motion. The universe is a symphony of different clocks, and we are nothing but melodies.





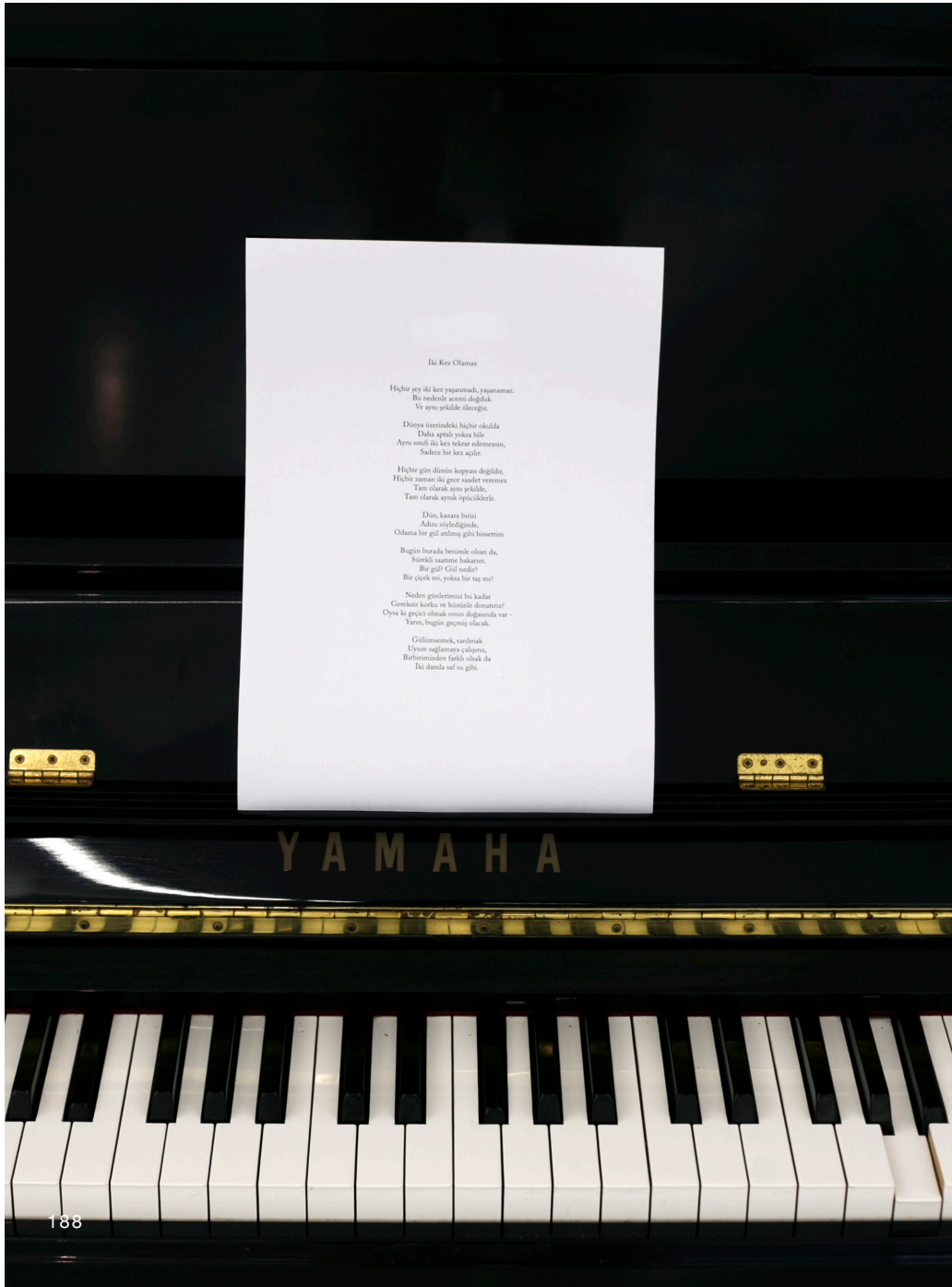


Elsa Sahal
Grotte généalogique, 2006
Glazed ceramic, 5 pieces
100 x 244 x 122 cm



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TEXTS AND CATALOGUES




Perceiving After the “End of History”: Pablo Dávila’s Sensorial Reworking of Duration

← **SENZA REPLICA (2nd) - 1**
YAMAHA DISCLAVIER
PIANO, MIDI SYSTEM,
CUSTOM MADE
COMPUTER CODING
VARIABLE DIMENSION
2019

In his multidisciplinary works, Pablo Dávila takes the traditional artistic media as a starting point to question how they reflect the social construction of space and time. In his installations, the Mexico City-based artist excavates a space for interference and ambiguity through forms both pared-down and rich with an immediate sensorial experience. *Senza Replica* (2019) exemplifies such a task: a custom programmed piano plays a composition, keys moving untouched, as a musical clock controls their motion. The sequence develops through an algorithm ensuring that no key combination of an 88-key piano keyboard is played twice, evolving towards an asymptotic, and seemingly infinite point at the rhythm of one chord per second. At first, when experiencing the work’s transient presence between presence and absence, one could think of hauntology, a term that entered popular discourse in the 2000s to describe the paradoxical nature of being in time: that of a temporal disjunction characteristic of our “end of history” era. However, Pablo Dávila’s own investigation goes a step further, as it is not so much haunted as it is in perpetual evolution. Time is out of joint, but it has always ontologically been so, only obscured by our faith in History as a linear progression. The artist anchors his work *Senza Replica* inside the philosophical tradition of duration, from Aristotle to Bergson. Thus, duration emerges as an experience of pure mobility, evolution and multiplicity, detached from any determinism. It calls for a reversal of our habitual modes of thought, and to let go of our preconceived patterns of perception. Dávila renders such a vital task perceivable, as he holds the viewer captive inside a mesh of dynamic entanglements, objective description slowly melting away as each new chord arises.

PABLO DÁVILA

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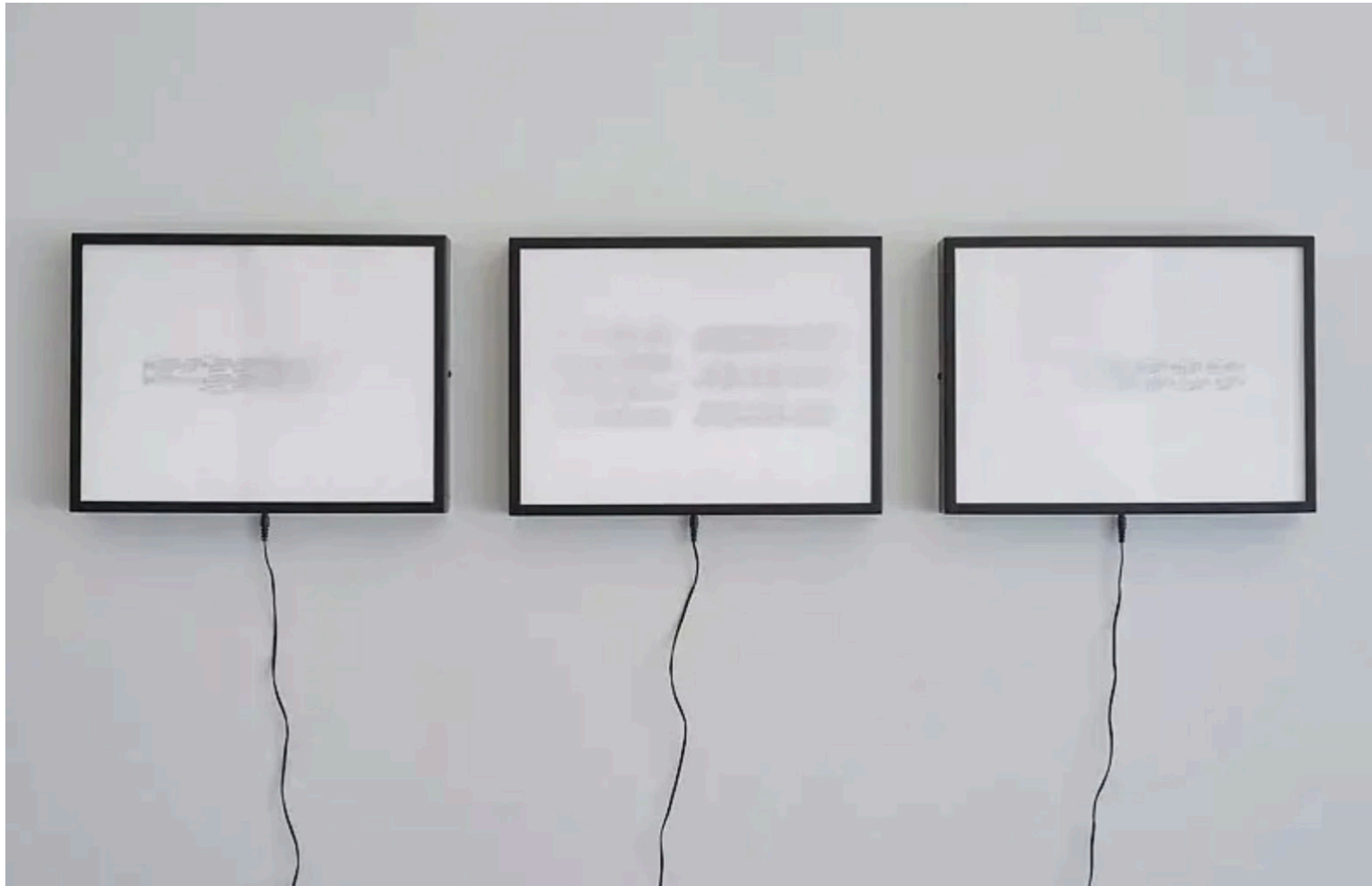
"Our 'now' has become at once more unforgivingly brief and unprecedentedly elastic. The half-life of media-product grows shorter still, 'til it threatens to vanish altogether, everything into some weird quantum logic of its own, the Warholian Fifteen Minutes becoming a quark-like blink. Yet once admitted to the culture's consensus-pantheon, certain things seem destined to be with us for a very long time indeed. This is a function, in large part, of the Rewind button.

And we would all of us, to some extent, wish to be in heavy rotation. And as this capacity for recall (and recommodification) grows more universal, history itself is seen to be even more obviously a construct, subject to revision. If it has been our business, as a species, to dam the flow of time through the creation and maintenance of mechanisms of external memory, what will we become when all these mechanisms, as they now seem intended ultimately to do, merge?

The end-point of human culture may well be a single moment of effectively endless duration, an infinite digital Now. But then, again, perhaps there is nothing new, in the end of all our beginnings, and the bison will be there, waiting for us."

EXTRACT FROM *DEAD MAN SPEAKS*,
WILLIAM GIBSON
ON THE OCCASION OF THE EXHIBITION
UNDER ONE LAMP BY DAY, BILLIONS BY NIGHT,
PABLO DÁVILA, THE PILL, 2019

Under one lamp by day, and billions by night: Pablo Dávila



Did time create mankind or did mankind create time? says Henri Bergsen... What do we think about 'time'? What does it look like, what does it sound like? Questions we might not answer... Pablo Dávila gives the inspiration of many of these questions. The artis is here to create moods and to show how to feel harmony, exploration, sense, and emotion through an experience. In his first exhibition in Istanbul, 'Under one lamp by day, and billions by night' he shows the intention of creating a mood by combining visual elements and sound together... Sound creates a very particular presence in his exhibition and the entire show runs by it. That particular sound when you enter the show is all you think about, he explains the experience, 'In my mind, that particular sound is the sound of time'. We meet with Pablo Dávila through his work at The Pill Gallery and had a chance to talk about his work through sound. Now, it is your turn!

Was there a pivotal moment when you decided to follow your path as an artist ?

Pablo Dávila: Not really, it was more like a couple of years in which I started to shift into a mindset that allowed me to produce the work that I was interested in creating. Of course, I'm still shaping that mindset, the more you get into your own practice the flow of creativity becomes smoother, more interesting and fun, and I don't think that process will ever be over, probably just less bumpy...

How would you define your work to someone who's never seen them?

Pablo Dávila: I don't know, I don't even know if it is important to define your work. I can tell you that I prefer to talk about my work with people that have seen it; having said that, the constant realisation that everything has recently changed yet my instinctive flow to counter that reality is the main tension in my practice. I'm interested in this gap between what we live, what we perceive and what we remember.

Your work explores sentience and subjectivity through investigations in perception, space and time consciousness... How would you define the ideal subject? How do you manage to find the concept around which you built your exhibitions?

Pablo Dávila: My works are built around certain ideas and questions that interest me and that building process is done in my studio and in my everyday life. When putting a show together I try to portray those concepts as simple as possible; since I am dealing with questions about time and presence, which are very complex ideas, the result always ends up being more complex than what I intended.

You are using feelings such as harmony, exploration, sense, and emotion. what is the reason of choosing to subject these feelings in your work ?

Pablo Dávila: I am very interested in creating a mood. Mood is also an idea upon which you can build something else. In this show I did intend to create a particular mood by combining strong visual elements with sound, a sound that creates a very particular presence and permeates the entire show. When you think about the show that sound will be playing in your mind and will be part of the other works as well. In my mind, that particular sound is the sound of time.

Your relational aesthetic goes beyond conceptual identity... Within the exhibition a visual cosmogony of space, as a function of sound in tune with its infinite variability. What was the process of preparing the exhibition like ?

Pablo Dávila: The process was very organic, Suela (The Curator of the exhibition) was very receptive and proactive with my approach, everything flowed nicely. My approach towards art is very open to collaborations, I'm used to working that way, so when the communication is good then everything tends to work out.

It is your first ever exhibition in Istanbul. Can you tell us about how you found a space here as an artist?

Pablo Dávila: Well, I met Suela in Mexico City and she got interested in my practice after that I received an invitation to do the show, and so we started this collaboration. The most important aspect for a healthy artistic practice in my opinion is to work with people that you respect and learn from, in this case my experience in turkey couldn't be better...

The shadows in your work have an infinite effect that dare to be timeless and spaceless in the pursuit of freedom... How would you define the harmony within your work?

Pablo Dávila: Shadows are an important element in this show, the only light sources are sunlight and a spinning lightbulb in the middle of the room, so these shadows (to me) convey a sense of disorientation, they are always present and always changing, making our own physical presence visible to ourselves and therefore a part of the show. We are always with ourselves, this is something so normal that we don't think about it, in other types of art such as literature or film it is easier to forget yourself and get immersed in that other reality. In my practice I like to get the viewer involved in the work rather than lost inside it. So this harmony that you mention I believe depends on the harmony that the viewer is willing to grasp out of the exhibition.

The genesis of space: Pablo Davila in Balat

BY MATT HANSON | ISTANBUL | ARTS | JUN 25, 2019 | 12:18 AM GMT+3



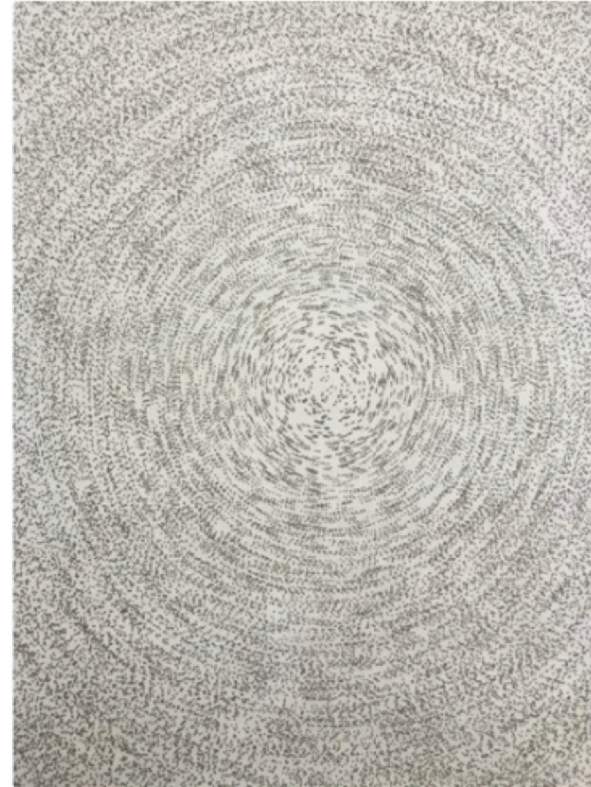
Let us go then (2019) by Pablo Davila, violin bows, 270 cm.

The current exhibition at The Pill, the best-kept secret on Istanbul's contemporary art map in Balat, is the Turkish debut of Mexican artist Pablo Davila. His relational aesthetics go beyond conceptual identity toward a visual cosmogony of space, as a function of sound in tune with its infinite variability

A smorgasbord of kinetic, sonic and purely visual multimedia works by Pablo Davila have come to Istanbul for his first solo show in the country, titled, "Under one lamp by day, and billions by night."

Its 14 interpretations on the theme encompass a retrospective breadth of past exhibitions at The Pill, towards a kind of morphic resonance in the vein of art. They are housed under the old Golden Horn roof of its highly pliable white cube until July 13.

Inside beneath a colorless square of ivory-hued signage, over the busy exhaust of Balat's main shorefront thoroughfare, Ayvansaray Avenue, a heavy industrial door leads into a fertile audiovisual field. The air hums with an intensive exercise in the development of a counterintuitive ear for repetition and its other. A custom coded Yamaha disclavier piano reenacts the ghostly effects of the player piano, as its keys clamp down untouched.



"Phase Paintings" (2019) by Pablo Davila, perforated canvas, 130 x 100 cm.

The performative installation of music without a musician is a strong metaphor for the ideological divides that rage in contemporary art, where the distinction of visual art from all art is blurred into a fog of minced cerebral debris, and the intellectualism of text and its reference to art objects merges into an inverted logocentrism in which the visible is secondary to its resulting conference of verbalisms. But in Davila, there is redemption. And still, he is not shy to engage the mythic power of naming through an autopoiesis of creation, instilling vibrations that course through emptiness like the tempting serpent of Eden. Its skin, once shed, becomes a trace of its past self. Or, as William Gibson wrote, "Time moves in one direction, memory in another." The quote is part of the literary ephemera that accompanies the show.

"Under one lamp by day, and billions by night" is a surefire psychological thriller of enduring and enlightening discoveries, a feast of sensual inspirations slowly exhaled like a long silence after the frazzled bang of a complex, dissonant chord, meticulously programmed into a midi system for 88 keys. As part of his research, Davila crunched numbers to better understand the pedagogical instrument's potential for harmonic variety.

He came to a common conclusion that is no less stunning for its having been fathomed numerous prior to his personal deep dive into the

figures. The number of notational possibilities for pianists to play are two to the 88th power or written out entirely: 309, 485, 009, 821, 345, 068, 724, 781, 056. It is no wonder the keyboard has seduced and confounded the greatest minds in human history.

A stranger in a familiar land

In the hands of Davila, expanded consciousness of the universe is also intimate, personal, flesh and blood. "Nothing Twice" (1997) by the Nobel Prize-winning Polish poet Wislawa Szymborska rests on the piano's mantle where the musician would read sheet music. Its philosophy was summed up by American poet Gregory Corso following Heraclitus's adage: "You cannot step into the same river twice," with, "You can't step in the same river once".

Or, as Szymborska began her poem: "Nothing twice has ever happened or will happen. / That is why we are born amateurs / And will die the same." To accent the unrepeatability of nature in its continuous procession is the forte of Davila, whose Turkish debut is centered by a light bulb swinging at the end of a cable. It revolves silently, entrancing to allure as it deflects. Under the influence of a whirlpool intoxication, the light orbits with the cursed magic of gravity.



"From me flows what you call time" (2019) by Pablo Davila, music score sheet of Toru Takemitsu's "from me flows what you call time" and charcoal.

Mixed like an erratic chorus of unseeable colors vibrating through the void, the piano resounds, unavoidably present, with a chaos of mechanical precision. It makes for an aural tapestry similar in style to what maddening opacity has ensued in modern composition based on the techniques of 12-tone serial music. Davila further appreciates the image-language of written music made with charcoal and a copy of the score, "From me flows what you call time" (2019).

In between lines for harp, trumpet and violins, the artist spelled out, "as far," "from beyond," injecting a layered, mental texture to the act of reading, from music, to sound to visualization. His work is a vessel, in the guise of a found object (which is both a musical and art term), through which to reflect on the meaning of cosmogony, namely the origins of the universe in every bit of its diverse manifestation. All parts contain the whole, as the whole its parts.

The sound of the first image

The dust of history is apparent at The Pill during the exhibition, "Under one lamp by day, and billions by night." Sourcing the original residue from previous shows, the house curation of Davila's Turkey premier is a dialogue on the invisibility of the past. Some 11 of 14 the works listed as the art on display are in fact not on display. The rectangular frames of artworks by Mireille Blanc, Leyla Gediz, Apolonia Sokol, and Eva Nielsen are subtle against the white walls of the gallery.

There is a circle within a circle among the impalpable art objects lost to time, titled, "Let us go then" (2019), comprised of violin bows. The installation is something of a representation of the practice of orchestral tuning before a symphonic concert, recalling the uncanny cacophony of polyphonous arrhythmic disharmony. As the linear form of the bow creates a circular perimeter against the whitewashed wall, the arrangement evokes a three-dimensional planetary shape.

Over the spherical, round, and waving contours of nature, straight lines are an affront, reminiscent of the impositions of anthropocentric historiography, from national borders to calendar time. Davila has extracted the violin bow from its element in orchestra pits and bluegrass jams among its countless roles that welcome its range from classical grandeur to everyman's row.

Arguably the most traditional pieces of Davila's decidedly avant-garde work are a series of perforated canvases known as "Phase Paintings" (2019). With his most recent work, Davila is advancing his peculiar post-materialist and trans-media approaches to the discipline of

contemporary art as a demonstration of being in the present, of embodying timelessness by inhabiting objects, processes, expressions, and placements.

With a kindred spirit to the music of Steve Reich, specifically his "Phase" music, for piano and violin, exacting perforations in his three canvases create the optical illusion of a focus softening and sharpening. One makes the impression of water droplets misting into a cascade of indiscernible, minute detail. Another deepens at its core into a spiral, swept in a haze of constellated points of blackness.

The third of Davila's perforated canvases conveys the visceral sense of charging through the intergalactic starry firmament at warp speed. It is an apt picture by which to consider the rise of a Mexican artist to a unique global stature, as Davila has enjoyed exhibitions across Mexico, the U.S., and Lebanon. In Turkey, his is an auspicious new arrival in the free market of ideas.

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