

Roberto Vega

CUTICLES
OF
DUST



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ROBERTO VEGA

THESIS CATALOG
PRESENTED TO THE
MFA FINE ARTS PROGRAM
AT THE SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS
NEW YORK CITY, NY.

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS.

ROBERTO VEGA
APRIL 2018
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THANK YOU

SHEILA PEPE
MEDIA FARZIN
MIGUEL LUCIANO
DAVID ROW
JULIANNE SWARTZ
JAMES SIENA
MARK TRIBE
APARICIO VEGA
GEORGINA CORNEJO
GABRIELA VEGA
LUCA VEGA
JOSÉ PEÑA
PILAR FLORES
BELÉN SANTILLÁN

Las cosas. O sea la vida.

Jorge Carrera Andrade
El objeto y su sombra

Undoing is just as much a democratic right as doing.

Gordon Matta-Clark

If we are asked to remember a space, one that has a personal attachment to our own history, we will picture specific details: the color and the texture of the walls, the light at a certain moment during the day, the type of furniture, the smell. Our connection to space goes beyond visual appreciation and its components affect us on different levels. Remembering a space may be the same as to read it as it was imprinted on our memory, but space also shifts in our minds, it fades and transforms as we move through the impulse of recalling or forgetting it.

The architecture we live in shapes us, but we also alter it as we dwell there. The large ways in which power and history unfold as time passes and the minuscule actions of individuals construct the architectural fabric of a city and the places we inhabit. Through describing this connection between the space and the ways we perceive and interact with it, I propose to read architecture as an entity in flux.

Space is designed by culture and affect, the global and the intimate. Though, it can not be read only as a physical dimension with certain characteristics and limits. The everyday is constituted by spaces we inhabit, the ones we stay in, but also the ones we move through. These ordinary spaces are in tension between comfort and pain, longing and rejection, memory and oblivion. They are fragile bodies crumbling quietly.



Jersey City, next to an extension of Route 139.
Found intervened space.
October 2017.

During walking exercises, I found and documented segments of intervened spaces and architecture in flux. In this practice I have trained myself in different ways of looking.



Jersey City, 184 Central Ave.
Found intervened space.
January 2018.

My work unfolds as a response to the space in which it takes place. For *Cuticles of dust* (2018), the site-specific action departs from a question: where are the signs of human contradiction? which areas seem vulnerable?. My endeavor does not start with the impulse of the creation of an image, as I do not set previous statements of how the work will look at the end. After looking at the surroundings seeking for the particularities or odd details of the space, I perform an excavation within a section of it.

Sheetrock, for example, is a dry mass of gypsum collapsed and flattened between two layers of paper. I peel off these layers, making cuts, as making a surgery, lifting layers of dry paint. I also use a chisel and a hammer to break it and draw an irregular line with each hit. Later, I clean the excavated part -the fissure- with a small spike and a brush, as if cleaning archeological findings. Concrete walls make loud sounds when using the chisel, the physical effort of the constant hitting on the wall transforms the experience into a tough task. The tiny pieces of dry enamel or latex paint jump into the face. I need to step back from time to time in order to look at the aftermath of the action and analyze the next move. The cuts or the hits on the wall draw intermittent lines as they break the surface.

The exposed layers of paint, brick or gypsum, compose a tangible map of what builds a space; its open wounds narrate a story to which there are no words, only material strata that was veiled before. Through excavating, cutting and breaking segments of the studio, I can not only show the material layers and the traces of previous times, but I am also able to dismantle a physical structure, breaking it into pieces. The excavated section is what I call "the fissure": an erratic irruption on the space. Through the gap that the fissure opens, I can track the traces of the architecture moving as time passes, not still, never complete.

*wooden windowsill painted gold,
then cut to make space for the radiator*

metal air vent covered with fluff and dust

*black metal window frames, painted white,
then scraped*

curved wooden baseboard meets the drywall

*thick layers of white paint starting to tumble
from the old column*

corner of a ripped art newspaper stuck on the floor

leaking and murmuring radiator

cable fastener embedded in multiple layers of paint

various hues of white paint on the top of the walls

pipes of different thickness forming a lattice

collection of artists debris underneath the radiator

Description of studio 909

School of Visual Arts

133 W. 21st. St., New York City, NY.

Cracks and smudges are inscriptions of time: material evidence of the fragility of building structures. The fissures that interrupt walls or the mold stains in the corners inhabit the space at their own and silent pace. Thus, one must look slowly to recognize them, one must shift the momentum of one's gaze. Therefore, my reaction to these marks is also embedded in a slow time, as if I need to adjust my pace to theirs.

The studio appears almost empty. The remains of the excavation indicate that something has happened but at first sight, it is not completely noticeable. I aim for a slow-paced gaze, one that takes time to recognize the subtleties. The dust that came out from the walls or the drawing made with fluff can easily pass unnoticed. *Cuticles of dust* unfolds the space between the seen -banal, usual features of a room- and the unseen aspects of it. Only when the gaze is attentive these subtleties will stand out. To be able to see one has to look at the space long and carefully enough. After the excavation, I rearrange its remains as they become witnesses of the process. This moment opens an interval for a new order in which I can reset the space. Dust and dry pieces of paint bring attention to what is hidden, pointing out the delicate composition of what surrounds us.

This state of attention allows one to read the space in its fluidity. Physical reality is no longer a given and unchangeable system, our perception of it is capable of being undone and that in itself can be emboldening. Thus one can take action, react, or perhaps dwell the instant before the response, shifting the bounded order with curiosity.



Jersey City, Griffith St.
Found intervened space.
November 2017.

A DRAWING IN THE SPACE

AN ACT OF LOOKING





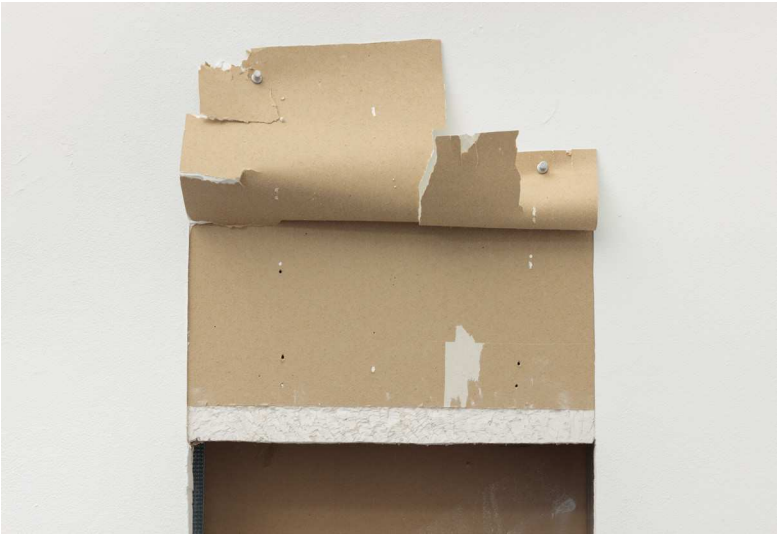




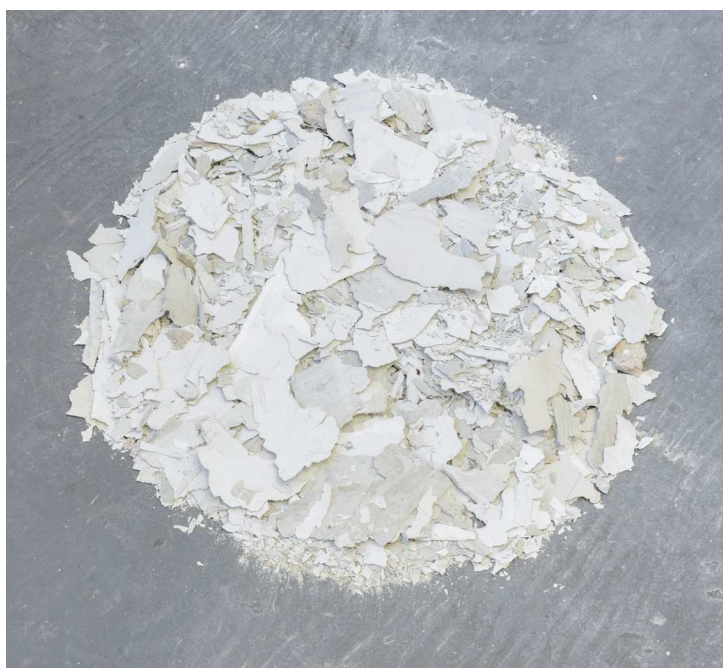














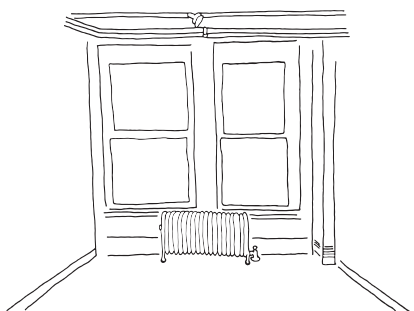






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WAS A SITE-SPECIFIC WORK THAT HAD
TO BE REMOVED AT THE END OF
MAY 2018.



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