



GALERIE QUYNH CONTEMPORARY ART

lunar breccia

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GALERIE QUYNH
118 Nguyen Van Thu, Dakao Ward
District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

+84 28 3822 7218
info@galeriequynh.com
www.galeriequynh.com

lunar breccia

Galerie Quynh is thrilled to present *Lunar Breccia*, a group exhibition featuring new and previously unseen works by Hoàng Dương Cầm, Sandrine Llouquet, Keen Souhlaï, Võ Trân Châu, Đỗ Thanh Lãng, Hoàng Nam Việt and Nghĩa Đặng.

Like *Alluvium* in 2018, this unusual grouping of emerging and established artists, each with distinct working methodologies, thematic concerns and use of materials, highlights the artists' ongoing projects and serves as a preview of focused solo exhibitions to be presented at the gallery in the coming years.

The term *lunar breccia* refers to a classification of moon rocks created by meteorites colliding with the lunar surface. The debris from these impacts, comprising shattered pieces of ancient lunar rocks and meteoric fragments, are welded together in a fine-grained matrix – grains which seem to keep the motley of angular rocks floating in suspension.

As these fragments merge into a single breccia, the structure and its parts serve as an allegory for the collection of works on display – pieces which form part of ongoing projects, or are explorations for future bodies of work. Just as the lunar fragments raise questions of their lithic origins, the works on show invite viewers to consider the artists' practices beyond the scope of the exhibition. The breccial texture reflects how this contextual labour of art – the research, the influences, the planned encounters and chance discoveries – can be at

once structured and random (or perhaps serendipitous). Though lunar here has immediate associations with the moon and thus evokes the notion of site – of outer-space, of galaxies, of landscapes real or imagined – the word also brings to mind ideas of time. Using the lunar calendar as a point of departure, the exhibition looks to alternative ways and systems of perceiving time. Even in the artists' use of varied media there emerges a quiet ode to the idiomatic process of watching paint dry. As one waits for clay to fire, or for the pigment of young persimmons to seep and soak into each grain of fabric, the importance of time is denoted through the transformation of materials rather than productivity or output. In the shift away from linear timelines towards explorations of non-chronology, the exhibition and its artworks offer entry to heterotopia – a space that concurrently exists in time yet outside of time, both mirroring yet upsetting what occurs beyond its boundaries.

From this strangely humble moon rock stems alternate ideas of time and space. As one wanders through the gallery space, lunar breccias can lead one down new routes of interpretation. Indeed, the word *breccia* suggests openings, passageways, even breakthroughs. Much like lunar breccias, then, the coming together of these seemingly disparate works is as much a union of the old as it is a creation of the new.

Thái Hà

exhibition views





Keen Souhlal



Keen Souhlal

Rock'n Roller Coaster, silver

2020 | rattan baskets, tire wrapping, plastic ribbon, plastic cable ties | width 35 cm, diameter 82 cm



Keen Souhlal

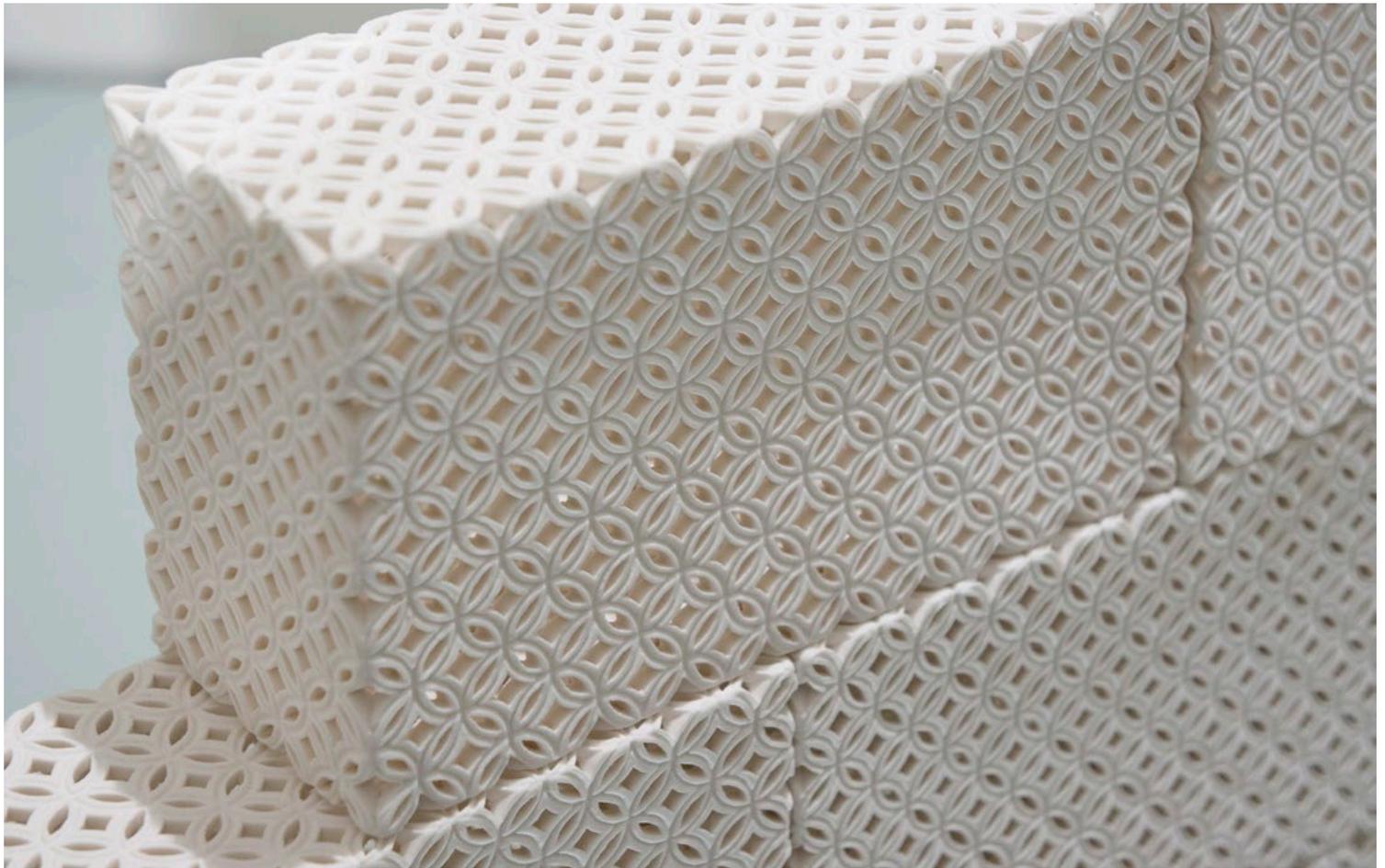
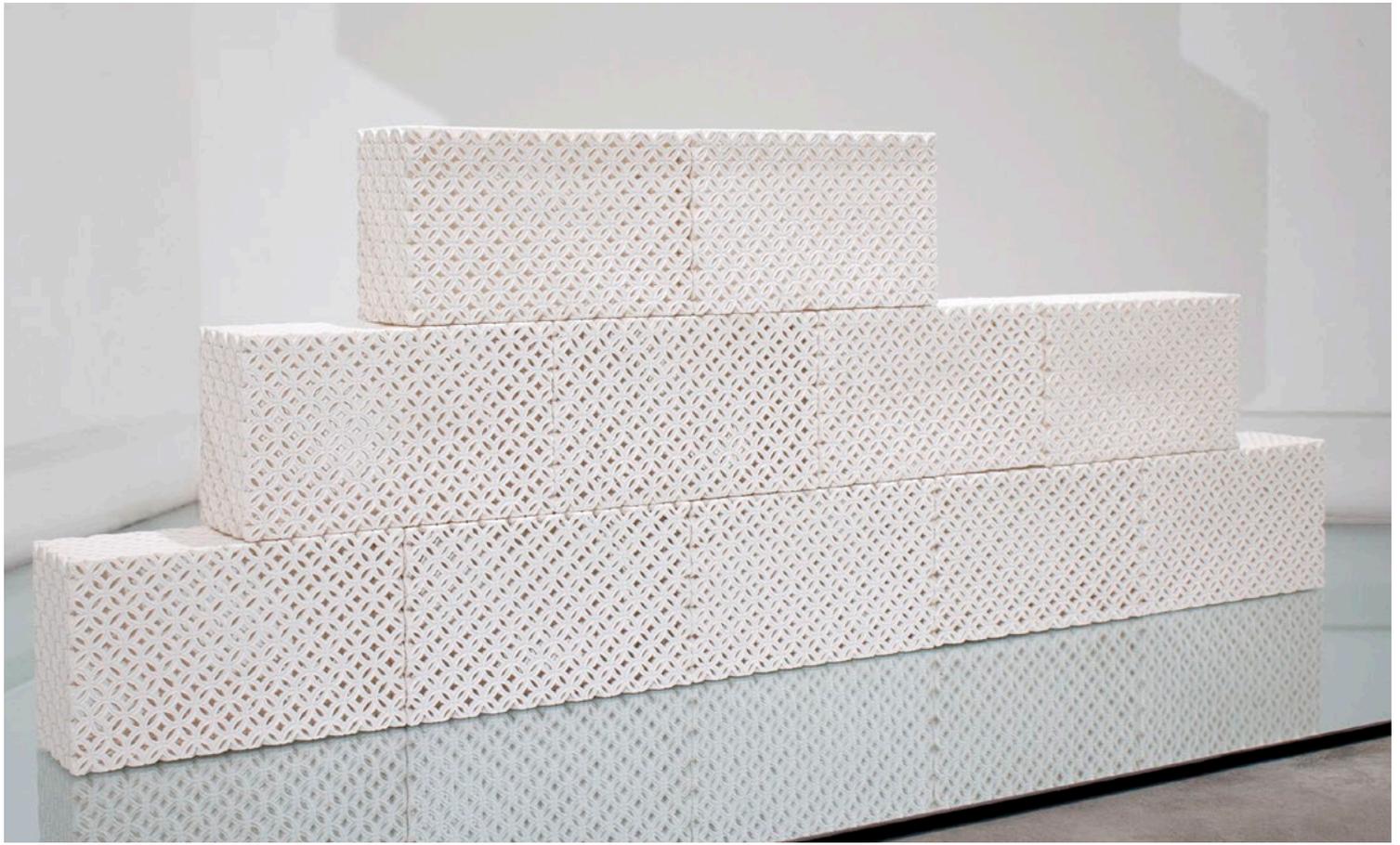
Rock'n Roller Coaster, blue

2020 | rattan baskets, tire wrapping, plastic ribbon, plastic cable ties | width 36 cm, diameter 80 cm



Keen Souhlal
Copper Tetra

2020 | bamboo fish traps, webbing, metal wire, copper leaf | height 72 cm, diameter 80 cm



Keen Souhlal

Reticulum

2020 | blanc de Chine | 10.5 x 17.5 x 7 cm each

Keen Souhlal - Biography

Through processes of melding, melting, carving, burning, Keen Souhlal reworks familiar materials to create sculptures with new and composite forms, presenting them in unexpected states of transience. Her detailed knowledge of materials, both natural and handcrafted, allows her artworks to display not just their physical properties, but also their symbolic significance grounded in the environments and cultures whence they came. The hands of the artist do not dominate or subdue materials, but instead reveal their plasticity and poetry. Led by the organic forms of her media, Souhlal's practice alternates between a wide range of disciplines, such as sculpture, installation, and photography.

The artist's latest explorations are rooted in the villages near Bến Tre and the swift energy of Saigon. Her encounters of both a pastoral and urban Vietnam are reflected in how she juxtaposes materials, combining functional items with iridescent surfaces. Through repetitive and meditative gestures – stacking baskets, wrapping paper – Souhlal conveys an appreciation for the humble and the ubiquitous – a purposeful spotlighting of the quotidian moments that pass us by.

Keen Souhlal (b. 1982, Paris) received her Fine Arts training from the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and completed her vocational training certificate in marquetry at the École Boulle. She has held numerous exhibitions in galleries and institutions in Europe, including *La Ronde #5*, Natural History Museum, Rouen, France; *16E Édition*, curated by Frédéric Bodet, Stéphanie Lefollic Hadida, and Laurence Crespin, C14-Paris, Paris, France; *In&Out*, Espace Culturel François-Mitterrand, Beauvais, France; *Alchimie des matériaux*, Centre d'Art Hors-Cadre, Auxerre, France; *Itinérance 2017*, Musée Dobrée, Nantes, France; *Politics of discontent*, Irène Laub Gallery, Brussels, Belgium; *Topographic 5*, Église Notre-Dame des Forges, curated by François Loustau, Tarnos,

France; *Viva Villa!*, curated by Cécile Debray and Federico Nicolao, Cité des Arts, Paris, France; *La Amenaza Invisible*, curated by Nerea Ubieta, Sala Amadís, Madrid, Spain; *11th Biennale of Young Creation*, La Graineterie, Houilles, France; *Por Venir*, Casa de Velázquez, Madrid, Spain; *Precarious Postures*, Museum and Gardens of the National Museum of Archives, Paris, France; *Intimate Cartography*, The 116 Contemporary Art Centre, Montreuil, France; *18th Biennale of Contemporary Ceramics*, Musées de Châteauroux, Châteauroux, France; *Hand in Glove*, Galerie Virginie Louvet, Paris, France; *Art and Landscape*, curated by Matthew Corradino, Sologne Biennale, Chaumont-sur-Tharonne, France; *Conversation with contemporary vestiges*, Centre d'Art l'Attrappe Couleurs, Lyon, France; and *Myths & Legends*, 17th Biennial of Contemporary Ceramics, Musées de Châteauroux, Châteauroux, France.

Keen Souhlal was selected for the Villa Saigon arts residency in 2020 and the Blanc de Chine residency in 2017, initiated by the Institut Français in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and Dehua, China, respectively. Her work is held in a number of private and public collections, including the Contemporary Art Collection of the City of Montreuil, and the Collection of the French Academy of Fine Arts, Casa de Velázquez.

Keen Souhlal lives and works in Paris, France.

artwork notes

Rock'n Roller Coaster

To follow the spirals of *Rock'n Roller Coaster* is to trace the cycle of basketry production in the villages near Bến Tre, where Keen Souhlal carried out her research and in-situ work process. Souhlal's humble act of arranging baskets, continuously stacking them one after the other, approximates the artisans' hands in cutting, whittling and braiding bamboo – repetitive gestures that fuel this micro-industry run by women. *Rock'n Roller Coaster*, accented by the metallic sheen of tire wrappings, is a celebration of feminised labour – of the gendered work that often goes unnoticed or is made invisible.

Copper Tetra

Explorations of routine and the everyday, seen as is and upside-down, are re-interpreted in *Copper Tetra* as observations of ritual. Souhlal use of copper not only evokes ideas of conductivity and connection, but also touches on its mysticism: copper is an integral part of alchemy and astrology not least due to its links with the planet Venus. This symbolic metal, in all its understated yet iridescent glory, almost acts as a conduit or portal, transforming the function of what were hitherto fish traps. As tetras, caught unawares, swim into the traps, they emerge on the other side into an imaginary realm – a parallel universe where spirituality and materiality are inextricable.

Reticulum

These porcelain bricks, pristine and deceptively fragile, blur the line between art object and building material, ornamentation and architecture. The curious construction is perfused with potential to at once divide – a delicately disguised feat to erect a barrier – and connect – through a lattice structure resembling the indistinguishable mesh of human relations. Remaining earthbound while slowly stacking skywards, *Reticulum* invites unlikely juxtapositions – an ode to the subtleties and nuances that could arise from a marriage of seeming opposites.

Texts by Thái Hà.

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