

GALERIE

HUBERT

WINTER

JAMES LEWIS

Before the hyle

Opening reception: June 30 2016, 7 – 9 pm
July 1 – August 25, 2016

The gallery is closed from July 23 – August 15, 2016.

“Throughout the history of subjectivity, *Cogito* is related to its shadowy double “*pharmakon*”, which is madness; madness is inscribed into the very (pre)history of *Cogito* itself, it is part of its transcendental genesis.”¹.

Before the hyle, James Lewis’ first solo exhibition at Galerie Hubert Winter, establishes a dialogue with this suppressed and obscure twin of subjectivity; it addresses a state before Logos, before the naming of things, a state of chaos, of disintegration.

Lewis’ artworks speak of a primary language, a language that is aware of its own indetermination. This volatile semiosis is mirrored in the material Lewis uses. The unfired clay, formed into a table and littered with earthen coffee cups, periscopes and other objects that are somehow associated to the mystic gift of clairvoyance, used in its unrefined materiality is exposed to its own corrosion, to its eventual return to dust. These psychic objects James Lewis forms from memory are reminiscent of a Golem invocation, retracing the word to its original meaning: an amorphous, unformed raw material, usually out of stone and clay, before it has been given a name, when all spirit is just matter.

The fungus *pleurotus ostreatus* that is growing on this raw clay table (*The fifth kingdom*, 2016) works as an agent of decay, as their fruiting bodies blossom and wilt, their invisible, ghostly mycelium is slowly using up any nutrients provided in the soil, rendering it barren.

These fungi can function as a trajectory for Lewis’ narration, their systematic ambiguity and decentred neural network becoming a figure through which one can read the works: just as fungi need a host to corrode and break up organic matter into their molecular components, James Lewis’ objects are infested with corruption: the corruption of memory, systems, logic, the viral recoding of matter and anima. The table becomes the nucleus of the exhibition from which these mycelian arteries spread and with it spreads the decay. Seeping into the floor, fossilizing Lewis’ objects, corroding the meaning and returning them to a nameless, unhewn state before subjectivity.

James Lewis (born 1986 in London), lives and works in Vienna and Paris.

August 2016 *End the Agony*, Futura: Karlin Studios, Prague
June 2016 *Opening Stable*, Futur2, Vienna
March 2016 *not really really*, Collection Frédéric de Goldschmidt, Brussels

¹ See Slavoj Žižek, *Less Than Nothing. Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*. London 2012, p. 330.

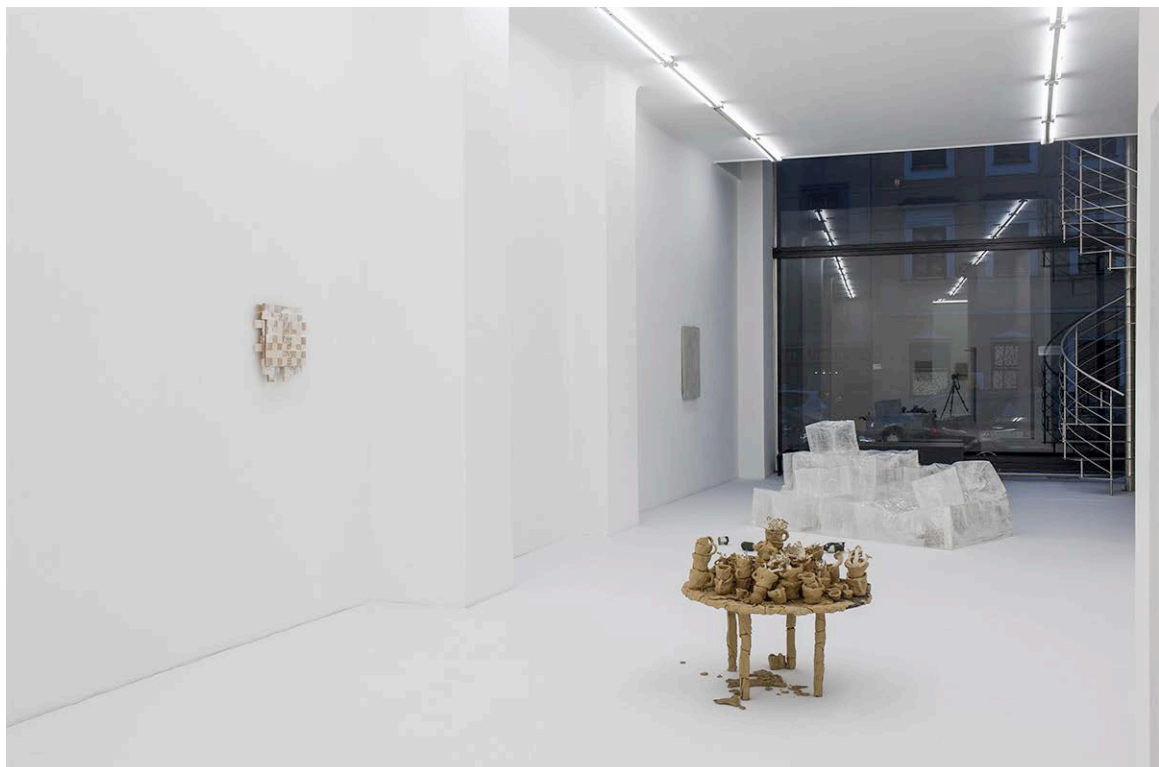
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James Lewis, installation view

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Under a cartoon soleil, 2016

Sellotape, clay, white carpet

195 x 110 x 95 cm

98 x 48 x 49 cm

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Under a cartoon soleil, 2016 (detail)

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The Fifth Kingdom, 2016

Wood, metal, clay, coffee, oyster mushrooms

85 x 85 x 70 cm

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The Fifth Kingdom, 2016 (detail)

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All bodies of whatever things (To sew, to seed and doubt), 2016
Plasticine and resin

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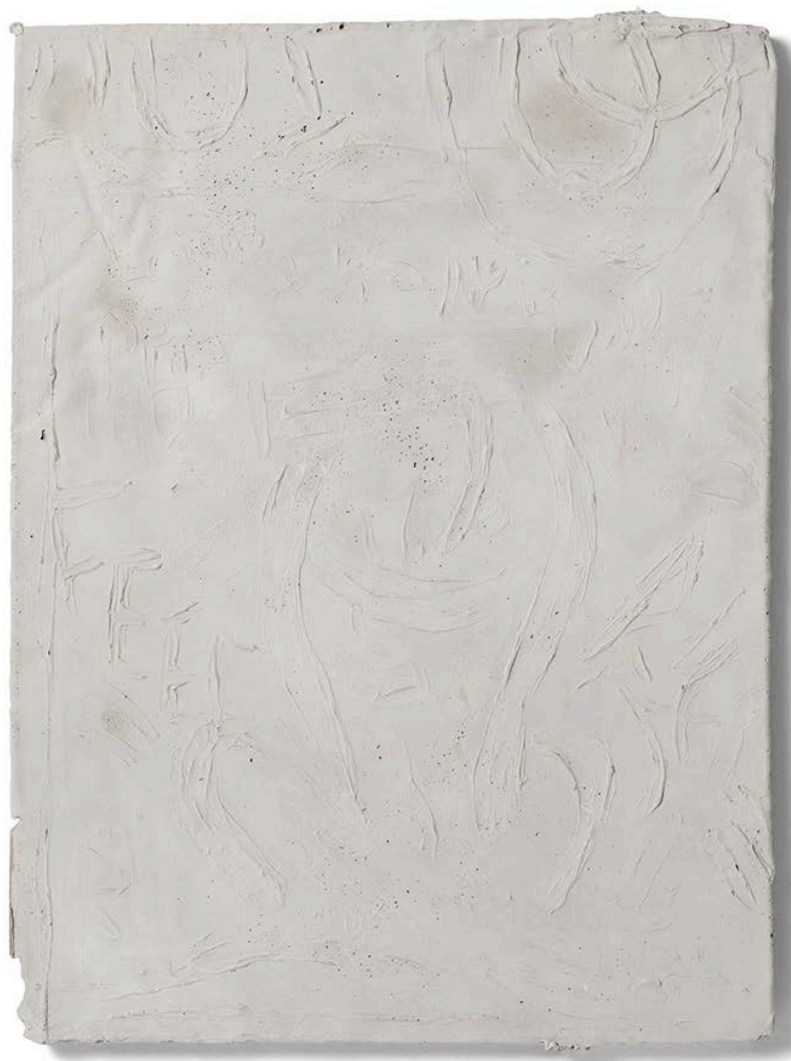
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Between a large stone and a thousand pebbles (Itch), 2016

Concrete

80 x 60 x 6 cm

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Between a large stone and a thousand pebbles (When more is different), 2016

Concrete

60 x 50 x 6 cm

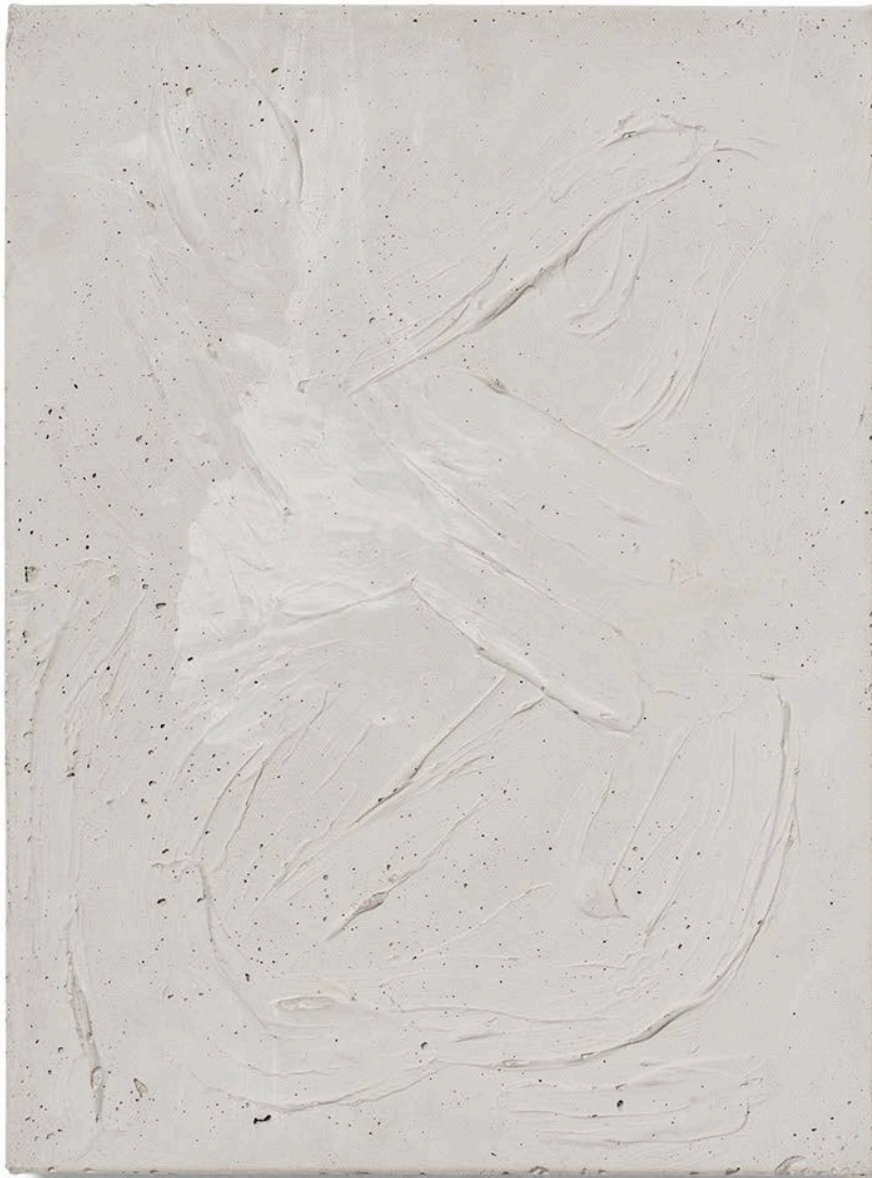
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Between a large stone and a thousand pebbles (How to argue in an Emergency Room), 2016
Concrete
40 x 30 x 6 cm

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Between a large stone and a thousand pebbles (I'm on), 2016
Concrete
60 x 50 x 10 cm

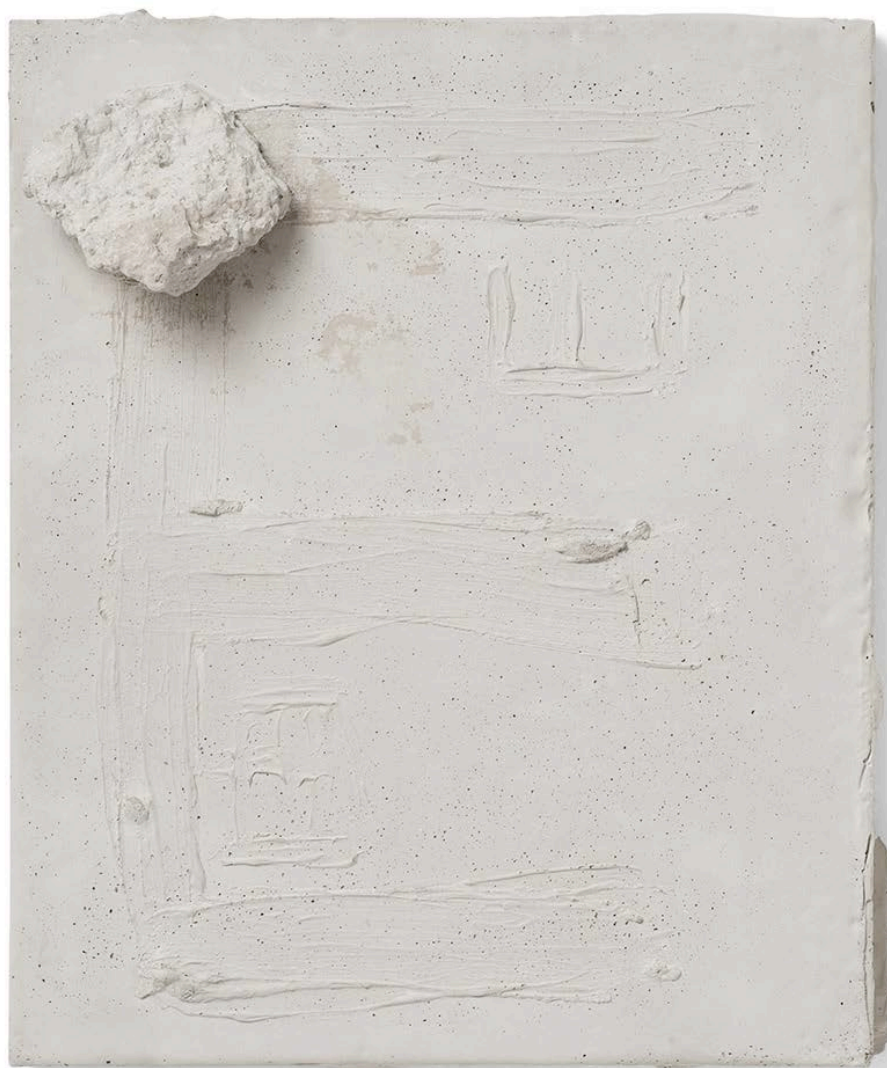
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Between a large stone and a thousand pebbles (Why is fragility non linear?), 2016

Concrete

60 x 50 x 15 cm

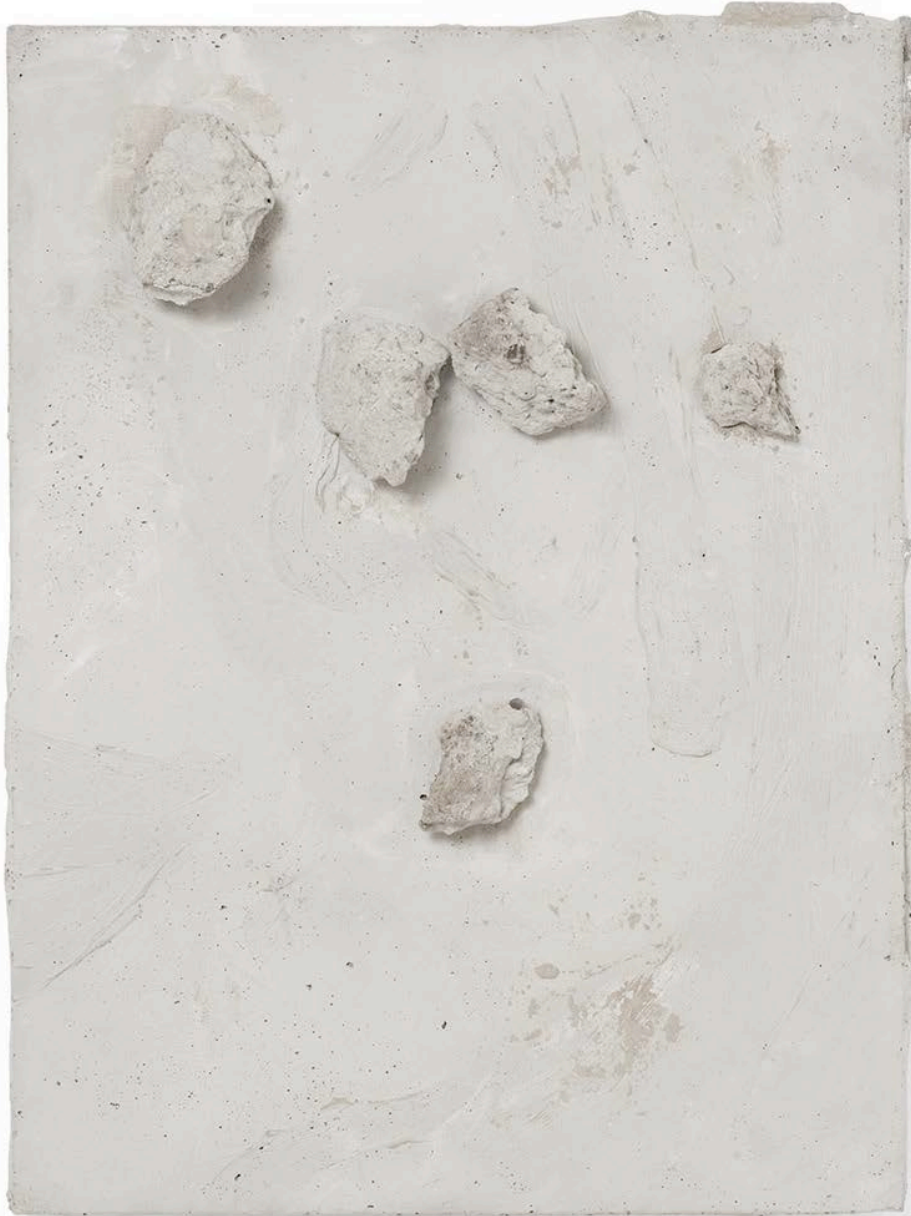
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Between a large stone and a thousand pebbles (Is it like cooking?), 2016

Concrete

80 x 60 x 12 cm

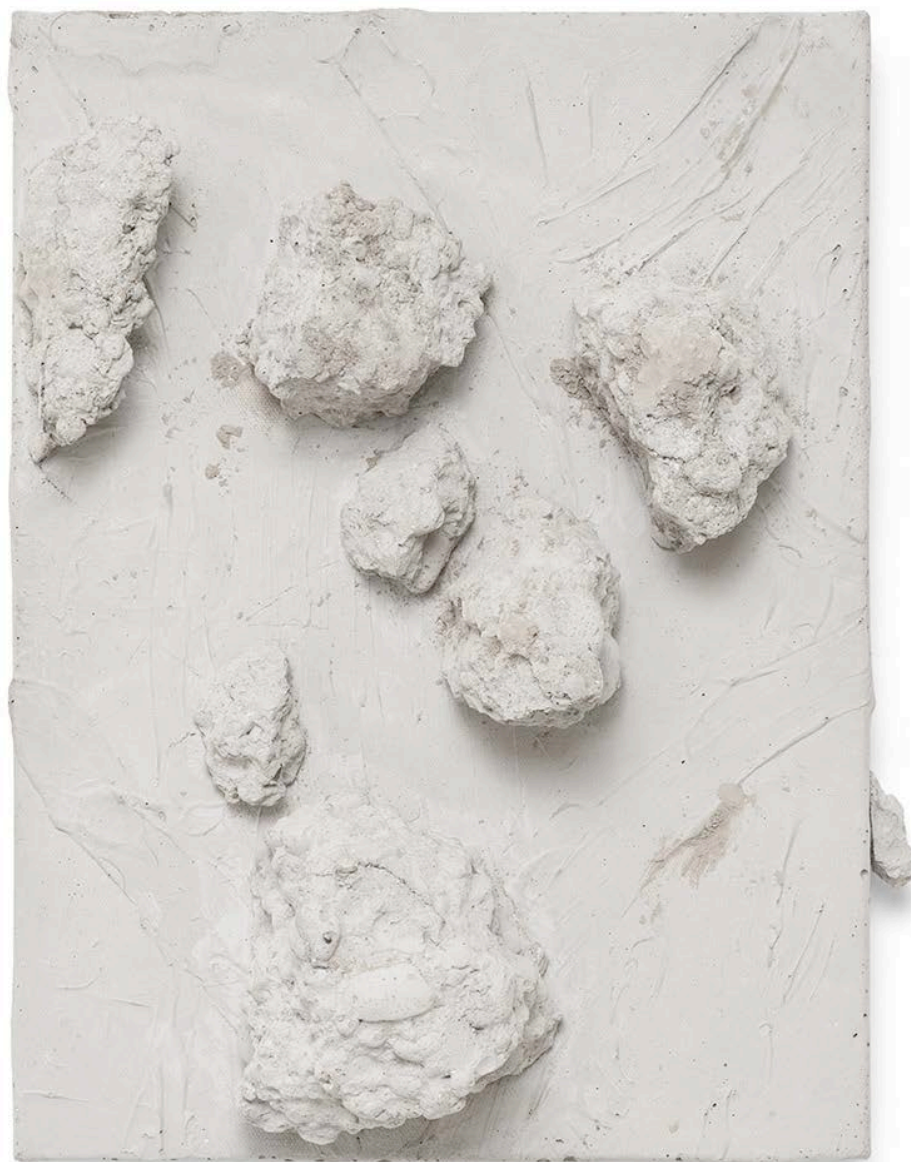
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Between a large stone and a thousand pebbles (Sick tree), 2016

Concrete

40 x 30 x 12 cm

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A Knight's tour (Cat Inner Ear), 2016
Spruce, larch, plaster, wax
40 x 40 x 8 cm

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A Knight's tour (Alveoli), 2016
Spruce, larch, plaster, wax
45 x 40 x 8 cm

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A Knight's tour (Small Intestine), 2016

Spruce, larch, plaster, wax

40 x 32 x 4 cm

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A Knight's tour (Mouse Jaw), 2016
Spruce, larch, plaster, wax
40 x 40 x 6 cm

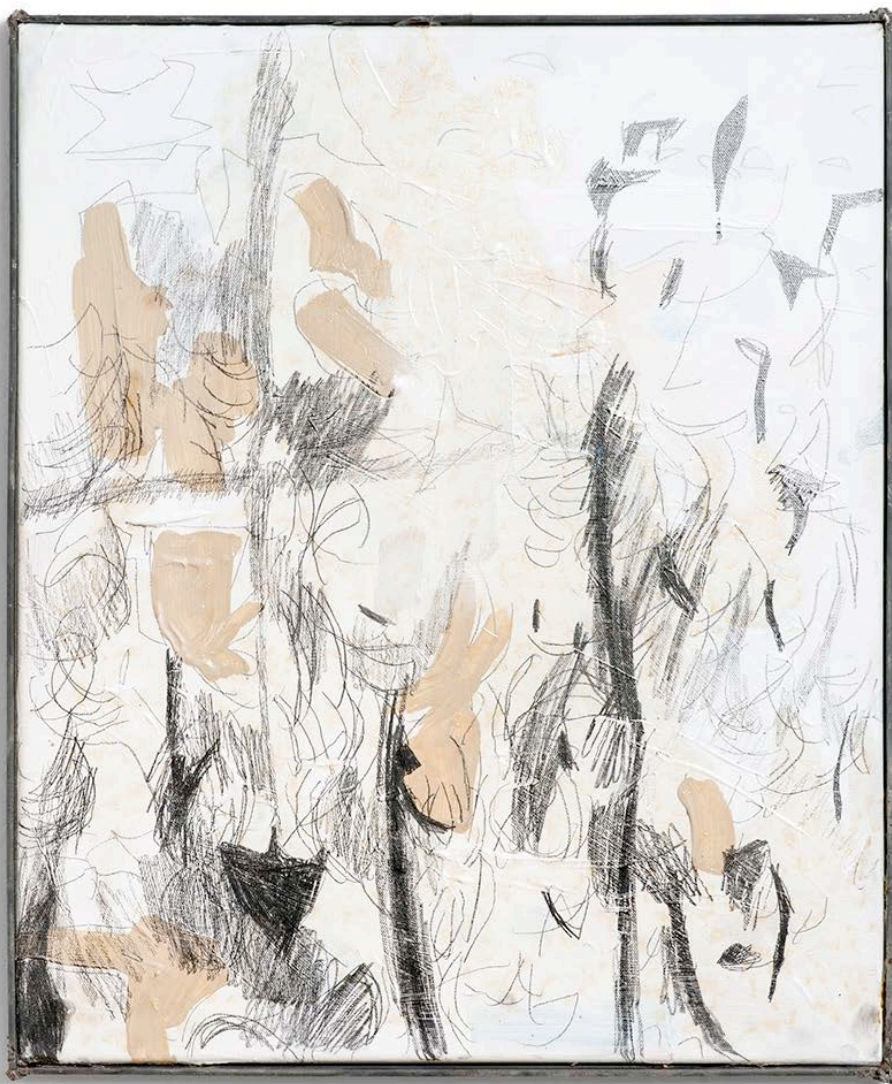
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To fall in love with the wind (Lecturing birds on how to fly), 2016
Acrylic paint, pencil, canvas, agar and artist frame
60 x 50 cm

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To fall in love with the wind (The cat and the washing machine), 2016
Acrylic paint, pencil, canvas, agar and artist frame
60 x 50 cm

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