Out Of Bounds
Curated by Bob Bicknell-Knight
Aram Bartholl, Bob Bicknell-Knight, Alice Bucknell, Mario Mu, Rosa-Maria Nuutinen, Everest Pipkin, Amba Sayal-Bennett and Mathew Zefeldt
1st February - 2nd March 2024
SEAGER, Distillery Tower, 2 Mill Ln, London SE8 4HP, UK

The first in a four-part exhibition series exploring how artists make work with and about video games, Out Of Bounds is an exhibition investigating the architecture of game spaces. The exhibition reflects upon how artists use game development software within their practice to comment upon the video game landscape, alongside our collective fascination with seeing what's beneath the surface of both the games we play and the spaces we encounter on a daily basis.

Each exhibition in the series is accompanied by a reading list of books that inspired the ideas behind the exhibition, as well as a number of books selected by the exhibiting artists that inform their practice, available to read within the gallery space whilst sitting on a custom-built bench. As the series of shows continue, the separate bookshelves will slowly fill with books, effectively becoming an archive of all four exhibitions.

Out Of Bounds takes its title from the video game term associated with areas within a game world that the player shouldn't necessarily be able to access, hidden behind tall structures and invisible walls. These zones, usually near the edges of a game map, sometimes enable you to explore and see what might have been, from half finished assets to gameplay testing areas. These hidden regions, ghostly and uninhabited by non-player characters, provide a glimpse into the complex and otherworldly infrastructure of video game worlds.

The works included in Out Of Bounds highlight and comment upon the structures that contribute to the creation of game worlds, architectural aesthetics and virtual landscapes.

The disorientating sculpture *de_dust* (2004) by Aram Bartholl comments on the aesthetics of virtual environments that were being built in the 1990s by replicating a pixelated wooden crate from the 1999 video game Counter-Strike. Within the game world the original function of the crate, as a packing

medium, is abandoned. Instead, the crates that are present in the first-person shooter function as architectural elements within the environment to complicate space and provide much needed cover for players. Engaging with how the video games we play are made, Bob Bicknell-Knight's *Animal Pack Deluxe (Rabbit_Die)* (2024) and *Mountain Environment (mushroom_scarletina_bolete_03)* (2024) explore the role of pre-made assets, specifically prefabs, within game development and our 24/7 lifestyle. Prefabs are simple game objects with low polygon counts used in multiple places across a given game. These prefabs are bought by game developers to make the creation of games easier; a contemporary coping mechanism harnessed to accelerate the production process of virtual experiences.

The first film within the exhibition, Alice Bucknell's *The Alluvials (Chapter 1: California pilled)* (2023) is the first part of a multi-chapter film and playable game that explores the politics of drought and water scarcity in a near-future version of Los Angeles. Focusing on the slippery interplay between engineered ecosystems, nonhuman characters, and the natural resource market that together define the future of LA, the story is told across several media, including custom-built game environments, modified versions of the fictional city of Los Santos from the video game Grand Theft Auto 5, 3D scans of the city captured by drone, and Stable Diffusion "hallucinations", merging historical images of the River with existing proposals for its redevelopment. Created within the video game development software Unity, the second film in the exhibition, Mario Mu's *Sites Of Encounter* (2022) deals with the transformation of the labour system, from factory settings to digital platforms. The film follows an intimate dialogue between a group of unknown characters as they navigate contemporary labour conditions in several abandoned architectural environments, from a factory floor to an office block. Questioning the morphology of spaces and objects, the film asks how space, memory and alternative ways of work could be re-mapped.

Reflecting on traditional ways of working, Rosa-Maria Nuutinen's *En Plein Air (Thunderjaw Site)* (2024) and *En Plein Air (Chasing for Monet)* (2024) are reproductions of landscapes within the 2017 video game Horizon Zero Dawn. The works both celebrate and attempt to capture the essence of the landscape by drawing on-site. Nuutinen created the works in front of her computer screen whilst the world of the video game continued to be simulated. The 3D printed elements of the frame reference the icons associated with different enemies within the game world which Nuutinen had to defeat in order to be left alone to draw within the landscape. An unfolding, increasingly reflective, html poem, *Soft Corruptor* (2021) by Everest Pipkin is accessed via an iPad within the exhibition space, exploring nostalgia, retro video games, out of bounds areas, atomic structures, view source, and ghosts. Interacted with through clicking the html <details> tag, the work is about surfaces and interiors in both subject and form.

Made from a variety of industrial materials, Amba Sayal-Bennett's *Ferro* (2023) explores ideas surrounding processes of abstraction, sci-fi aesthetics and map making. Other works in the show by Sayal-Bennett, *Syzygy* (2023) and *Softscape* (2023), are drawings presented within 3D printed frames. Produced using Computer-aided design (CAD) software, the works abstract and evolve real-world architectures, creating fictional elements and imagery that hint towards the essential architecture of our material world. The final work within the exhibition brings us back to how video games are created, highlighting the artistry behind the games we play. Mathew Zefeldt's *Surface Texture I* (2023) is a meticulously painted reproduction of the ground within the 2013 video game Grand Theft Auto V. The painting, part of an ongoing body of work documenting Zefeldt's escapades within the game world, seems to be reflecting on this perfectly imperfect array of rocks. Created by one of thousands of developers that work for Rockstar Games (the publisher behind the GTA series), this surface texture, which will have been repeated throughout various areas within the game world, is the embodiment of how exhaustive and extensively detailed games have become in a bid to replicate and improve upon the physical world around us.

Reading List:

- Never Alone: Video Games as Interactive Design by Anna Burckhardt, Paola Antonelli, and Paul Galloway, 2022 (recommend by Bob Bicknell-Knight)
- An Attempt At Exhausting a Place in GTA Online by Jamie Sutcliffe and Michael Crowe, 2017 (recommend by Bob Bicknell-Knight)

- Gamescenes: Art in the Age of Videogames by Matteo Bittanti and Domenico Quaranta, 2006 (recommend by Aram Bartholl)
- Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow by Gabrielle Zevin, 2022 (recommend by Bob Bicknell-Knight)
- Playing Nature: Ecology in Video Games by Alenda Y. Chang, 2019 (recommend by Alice Bucknell)
- Atmospheres: Architectural Environments. Surrounding Objects by Peter Zumthor, 2006 (recommend by Mario Mu)
- HR Giger. 40th Ed by Andreas J. Hirsch, 2021 (recommend by Rosa-Maria Nuutinen)
- The World Is Born From Zero by Cameron Kunzelman, 2022 (recommend by Everest Pipkin)
- A Thousand Machines by Gerald Raunig, 2010 (recommend by Amba Sayal-Bennett)
- A History of Pictures: From the Cave to the Computer Screen by Martin Gayford and David Hockney, 2016 (recommend by Mathew Zefeldt)

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Aram Bartholl (b. 1972, Bremen, Germany) uses sculptural interventions, installations, and performative workshops to question our engagement with media and with public economies linked to social networks, online platforms, and digital dissemination strategies. Bartholl has exhibited at MoMA Museum of Modern Art NY, Skulptur Projekte Münster, Palais de Tokyo, Hamburger Bahnhof, Seoul Museum of Art and the Thailand Biennale among other as well as conducting countless workshops, talks and performances internationally. Aram Bartholl is a professor for art with digital media at HAW Hamburg, he lives and works in Berlin.

Bob Bicknell-Knight (b. 1996, Ipswich, UK) is a multidisciplinary artist and curator working with digital media producing films, paintings, sculptures and installations. His practice comes from a place of pessimism, exploring power structures that proliferate online and in new forms of technology. Bicknell-Knight runs the online curatorial platform isthisit?, and has previously curated exhibitions at The Art Station, Saxmundham, UK (2023); [Senne], Brussels, BE (2021); Harlesden High Street, London, UK (2019); Annka Kultys Gallery, London, UK (2018) and arebyte Gallery, London, UK (2018). Selected solo exhibitions include Sunday School at Number 1 Main Road, Berlin, DE (2023); Insert Coin at CABLE DEPOT, London, UK (2023); Non-Player Character at Klaipėda Exhibition Hall, Klaipėda, LT (2023); Digging History at INDUSTRA, Brno, CZ (2021); Eat The Rich at Galerie Sono, Paris, FR (2021); It's Always Day One at Office Impart, Berlin, DE (2021) and Bit Rot at Broadway Gallery, Letchworth, UK (2020).

Alice Bucknell (b. 1993, Sarasota, FL, USA) is an artist and writer whose work explores interconnections of architecture, ecology, magic, technology, and nonhuman and machine intelligence. Working primarily through game engines and speculative fiction strategies, their work explores interconnections of architecture, ecology, magic, and non-human and machine intelligence. Their work has appeared at Ars Electronica with transmediale, Arcade Seoul, the 18th Venice Architecture Biennale, Honor Fraser Gallery in Los Angeles, Gray Area in San Francisco, Basement Roma in Rome, Singapore Art Museum, The Museum of Modern Art in Fort Worth, Texas, Fiber Festival in the Netherlands, and Serpentine in London. Bucknell is currently faculty at SCI-Arc in Los Angeles, Associate Lecturer in MA Narrative Environments at UAL, and a Somerset House Studios resident in London. They studied Anthropology at the University of Chicago and Critical Practice at the Royal College of Art in London.

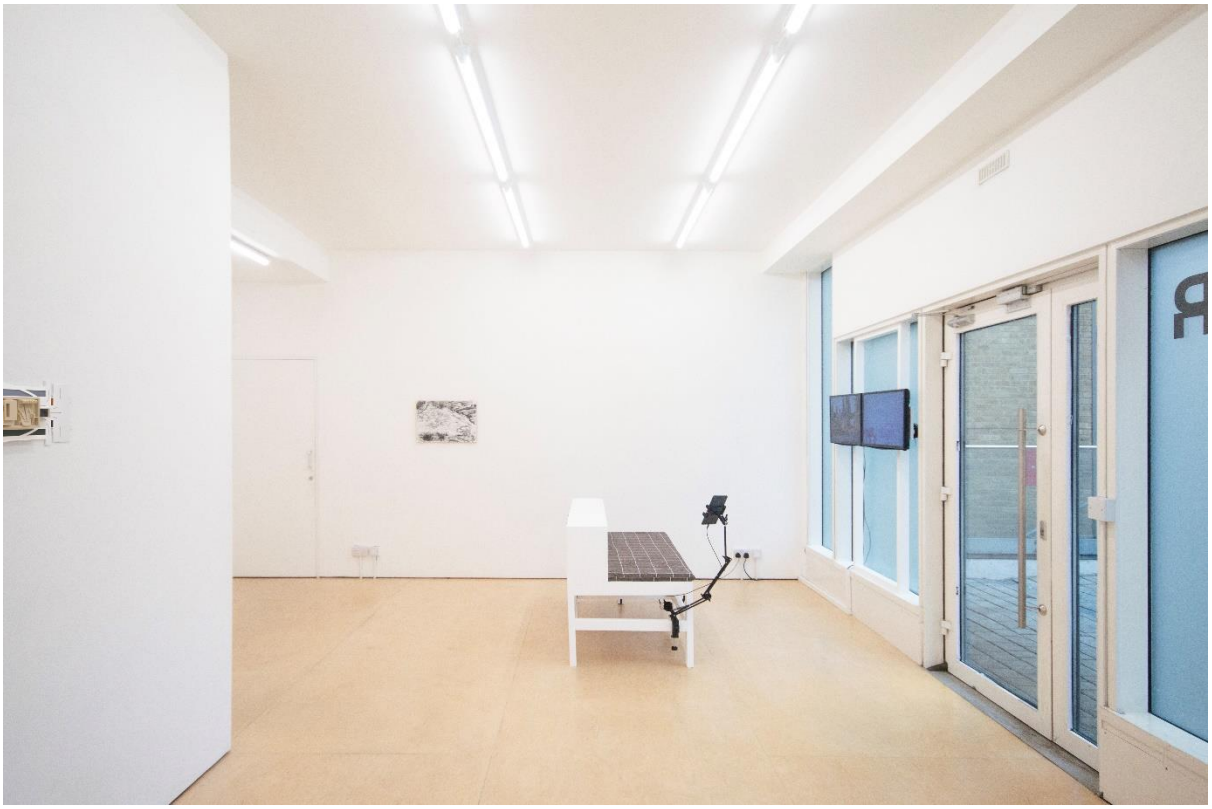
Mario Mu is a visual artist and director living in Berlin, Germany. Mu works on various research projects which are often constructed as extended gaming platforms. Apart from frequently incorporating sound and drawing, his practice mainly shifts between game design, 3D animation and performance. He received a BFA from Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, Croatia and an MFA from University of Arts in Berlin, Germany. During 2016. and 2017. Mu was an active member of the Research Center for Proxy Politics, and since 2017. he has been working on a series of events as an author and collaborator at the TAP-Théâtre auditorium de Poitiers, France; V2 Rotterdam, The Netherlands; MGLC Ljubljana, Slovenia; MAAT Lisbon, Portugal; Play Co London, UK; Pakhuis de Zwijger in Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Ufer Studios, Galerie gr_und and Silent Green in Berlin, Germany; MSU, Pogon and GMK in Zagreb, Croatia among others.

Rosa-Maria Nuutinen (b. 1992, Hämeenlinna, Finland) is a multidisciplinary London based artist working in drawing, photography, creative writing and film. At the core of her work Nuutinen is concerned by the ideas of our current society's impact on people and on the environment. Nuutinen considers our society's connection and disconnection towards ourselves, our bodies, other people and the alternative places to be and exist in response to those.

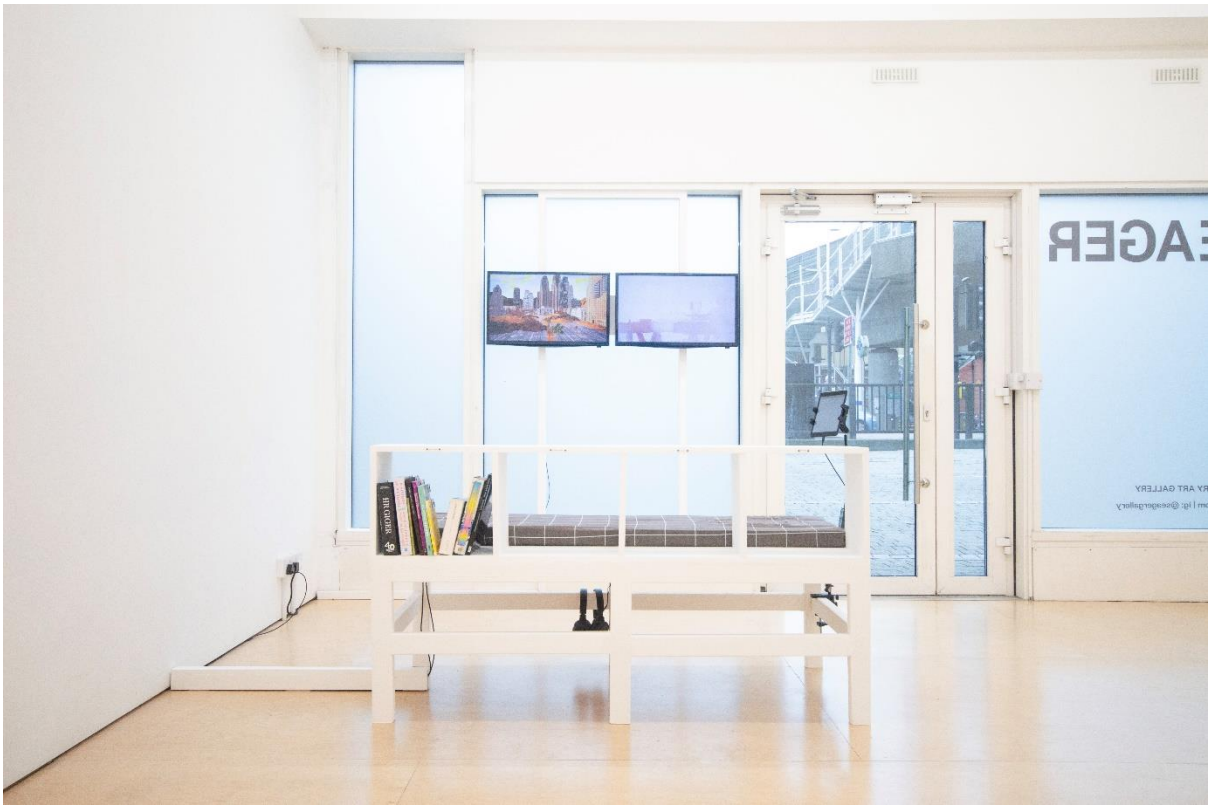
Everest Pipkin is a game developer, writer, and artist from central Texas who lives and works on a sheep farm in southern New Mexico. Their work both in the studio and in the garden follows themes of ecology, tool making, and collective care during collapse. When not at the computer in the heat of the day, you can find them in the hills spending time with their neighbors— both human and non-human.

Amba Sayal-Bennett is a British-Indian artist working across drawing, projection, and sculptural installation. Her practice explores how methods of abstraction are exclusionary and performative, crafting boundaries between what is present, manifestly absent, and othered. Sayal-Bennett lives and works in London. She received her BFA from Oxford University and her MA in Sculpture from the Royal College of Art. She was awarded her PhD in Art Practice and Learning from Goldsmiths and has published her practice-based research with Tate Papers. She is currently an Associate Lecturer at Camberwell College of Arts. Between January and March 2022, she was The Derek Hill Foundation scholar at the British School at Rome in Italy.

Mathew Zefeldt (b. 1987, California, USA) is Associate Professor of Painting and Drawing at the University of Minnesota. He received his MFA in studio art from UC Davis in 2011 and received his BA in Art at UC Santa Cruz in 2009. He has had solo exhibitions at The Hole, NY; Celaya Brothers, Mexico City; Hair + Nails, Minneapolis; Big Pictures, Los Angeles; 5-50 Gallery, Long Island City; The Soap Factory, Minneapolis; Circuit 12, Dallas; Verge Center for the Arts, Sacramento; Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis; Hap Gallery, Portland; and Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica



Out Of Bounds, 2024
Installation view



Out Of Bounds, 2024
Installation view

Out Of Bounds, 2024
Installation view

Mario Mu
Sites Of Encounter, 2022
Single-channel video
20 min 0 sec

Mario Mu
Sites Of Encounter, 2022
Single-channel video
20 min 0 sec

Alice Bucknell
The Alluvials (Chapter 1: California pilled), 2023
4k single-channel video
6 min 20 sec

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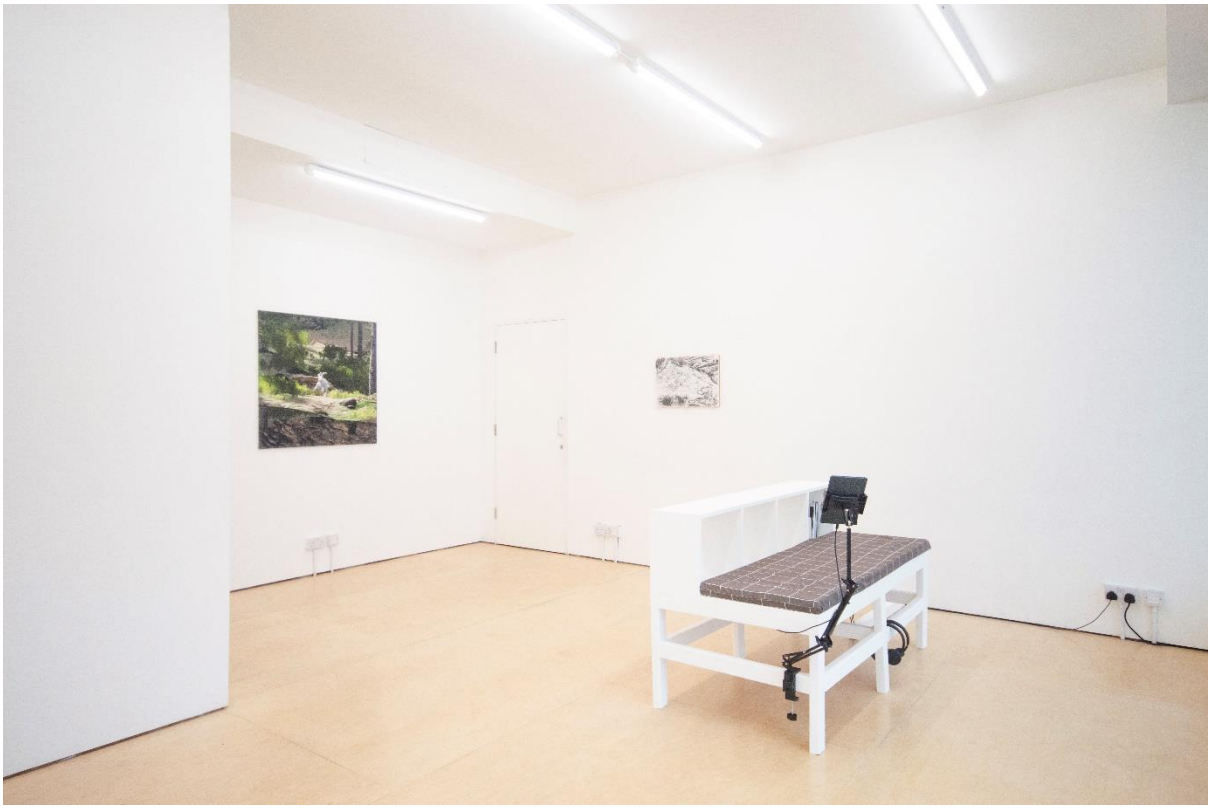

Out Of Bounds, 2024
Installation view

Out Of Bounds, 2024
Installation view

Everest Pipkin
Soft Corruptor, 2021
HTML poem, iPad Mini, phone stand
Dimensions variable

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Soft Corruptor, 2021
HTML poem, iPad Mini, phone stand
Dimensions variable

Out Of Bounds, 2024
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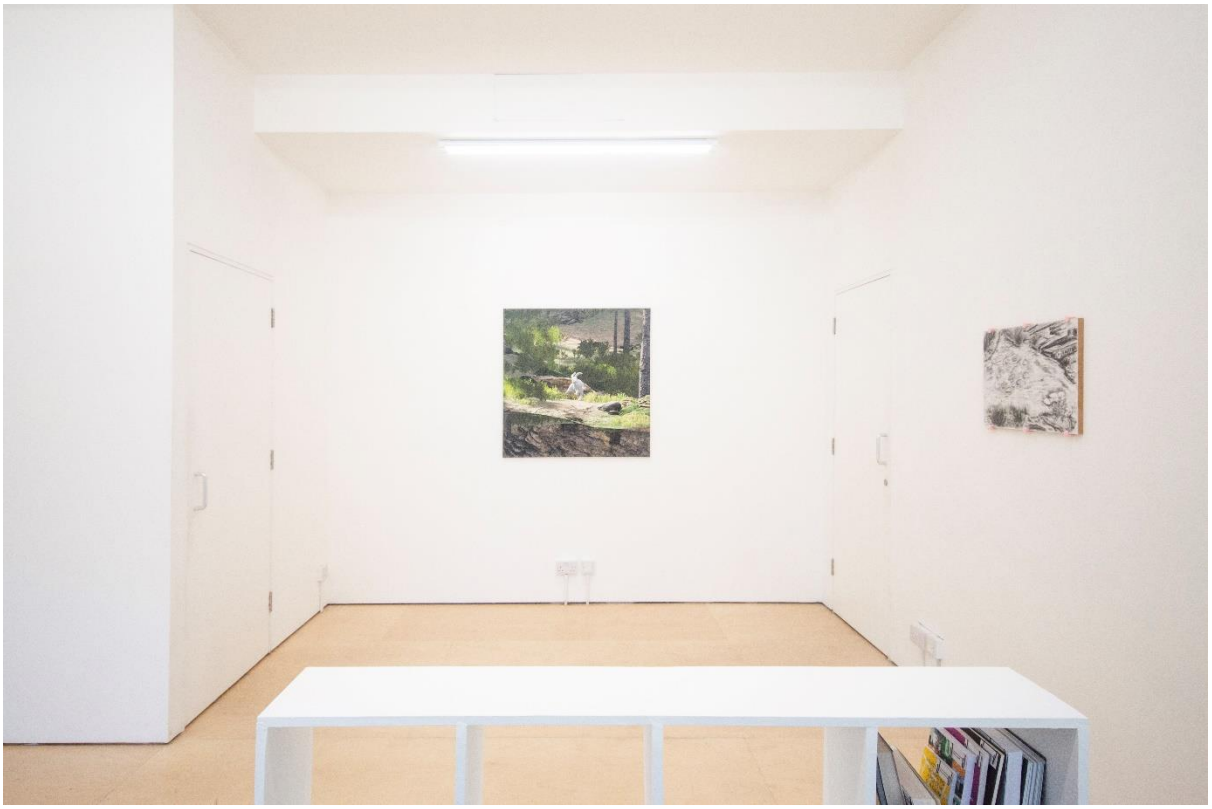

Out Of Bounds, 2024
Installation view

Rosa-Maria Nuutinen
En Plein Air (Chasing for Monet), 2024
Charcoal on paper, MDF, perspex, PLA, screws
56.5 x 41 x 2.7 cm

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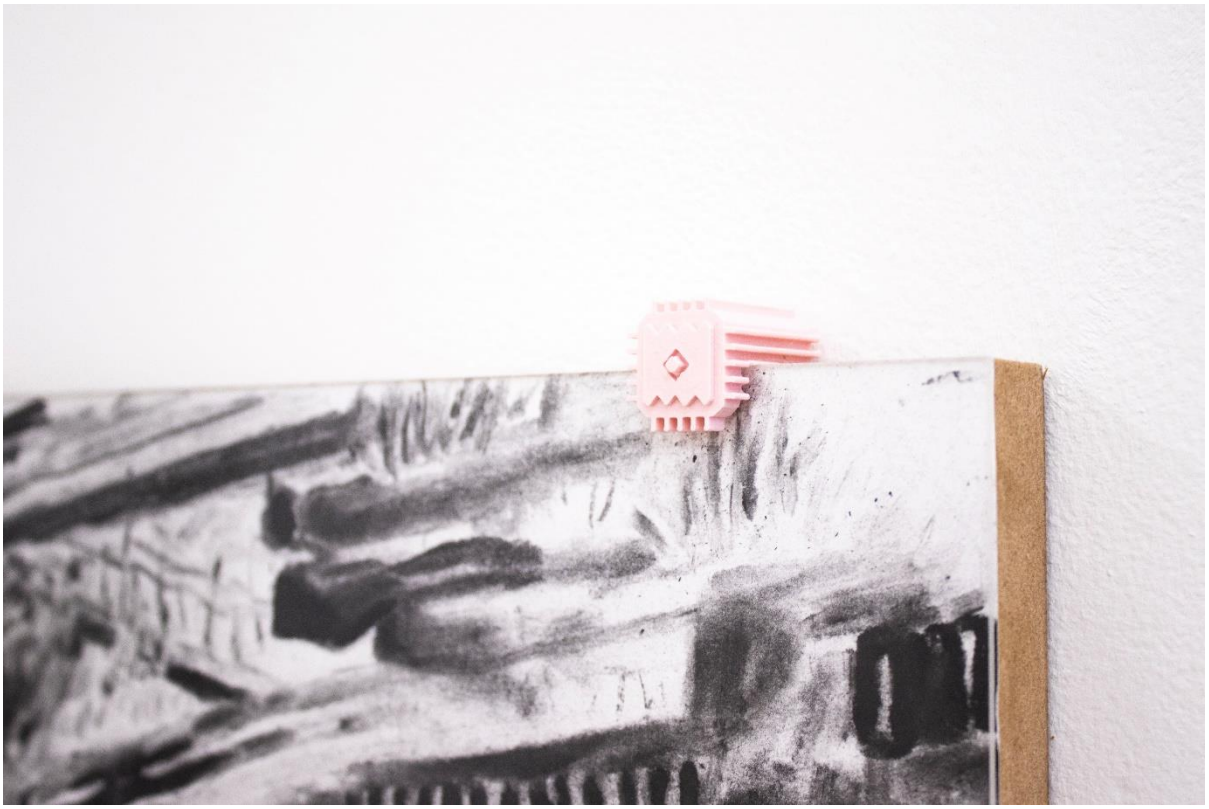

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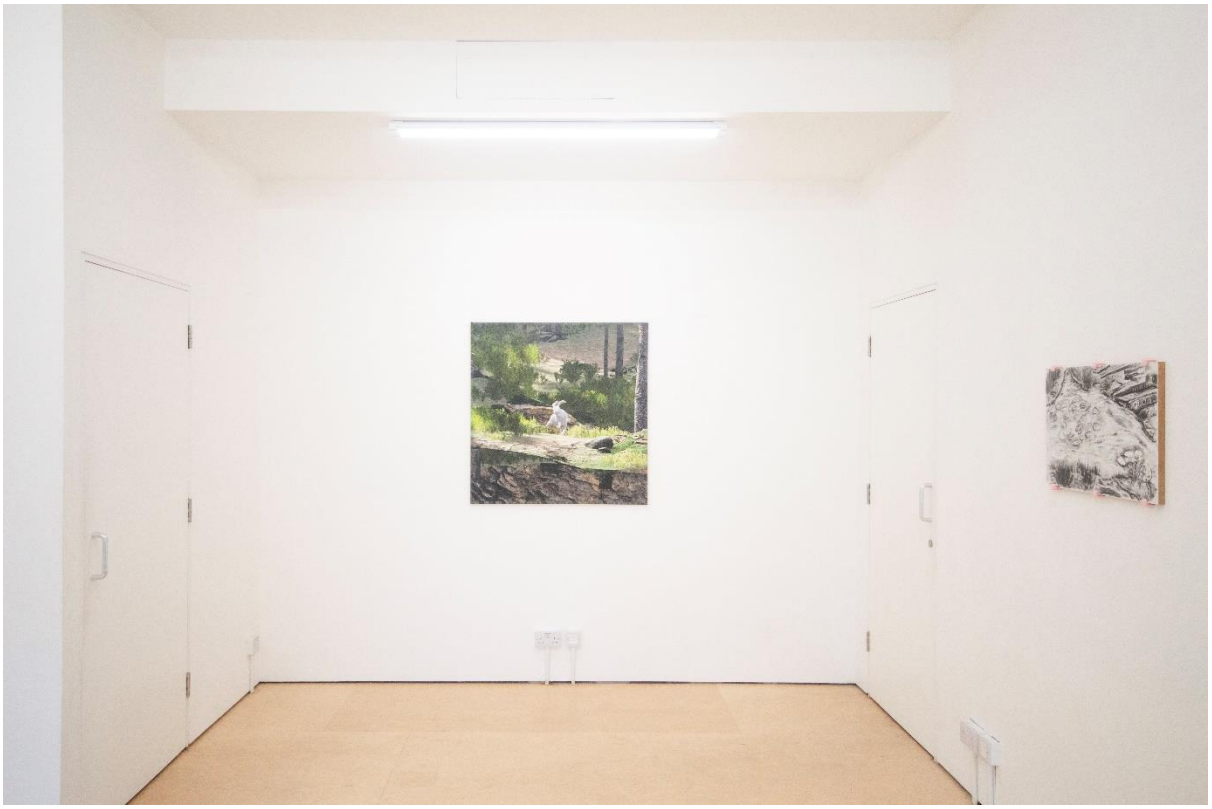

Out Of Bounds, 2024
Installation view

Bob Bicknell-Knight
Animal Pack Deluxe (Rabbit_Die), 2024
Ink and acrylic on canvas
100 x 100 x 2 cm

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Animal Pack Deluxe (Rabbit_Die), 2024
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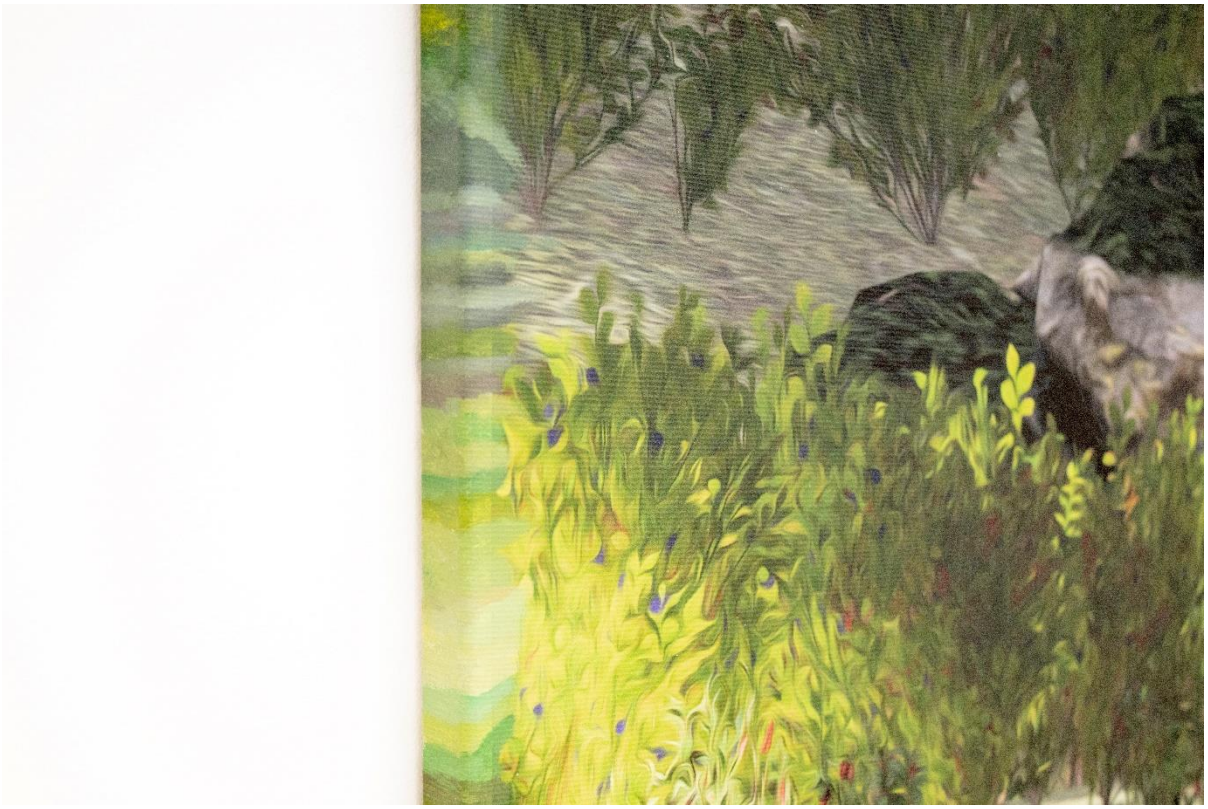

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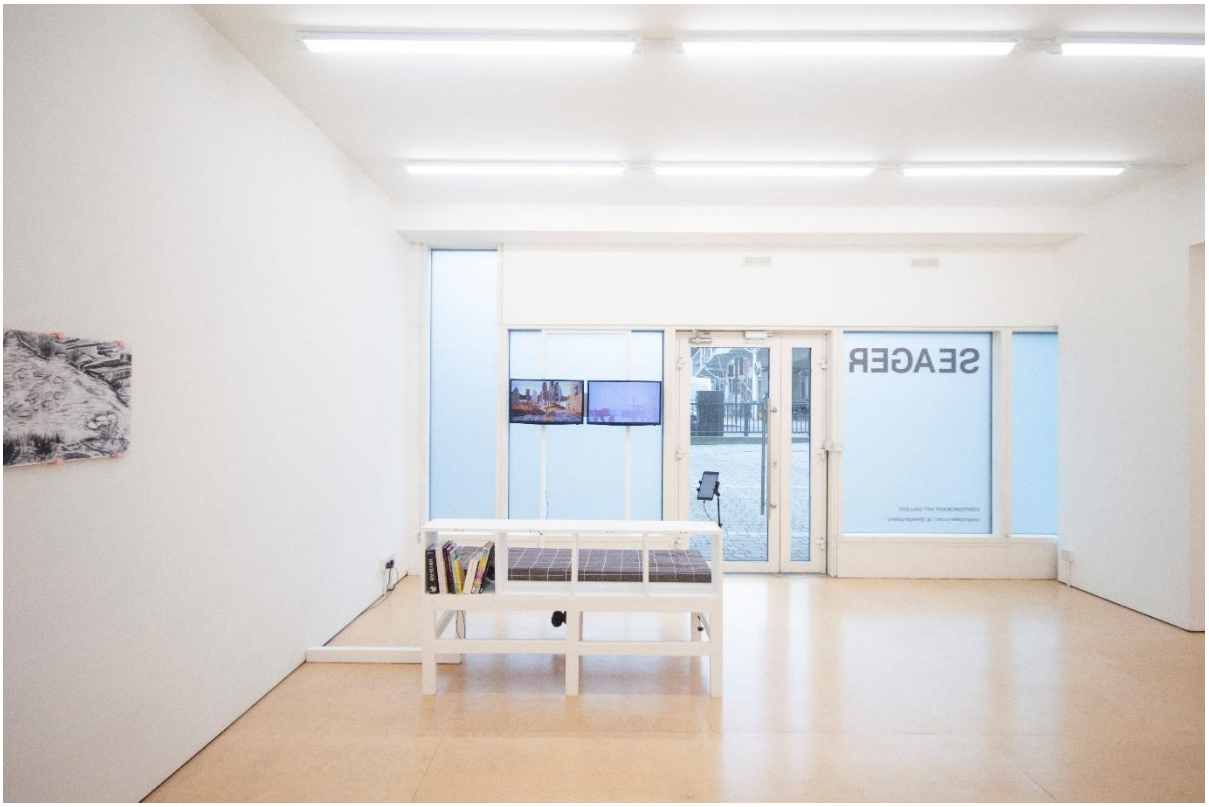

Out Of Bounds, 2024
Installation view

Out Of Bounds, 2024
Installation view

Bob Bicknell-Knight
Mountain Environment (mushroom_scarletina_bolete_03), 2024
3D printed PLA plastic, stainless steel screw
20 x 16 x 26 cm

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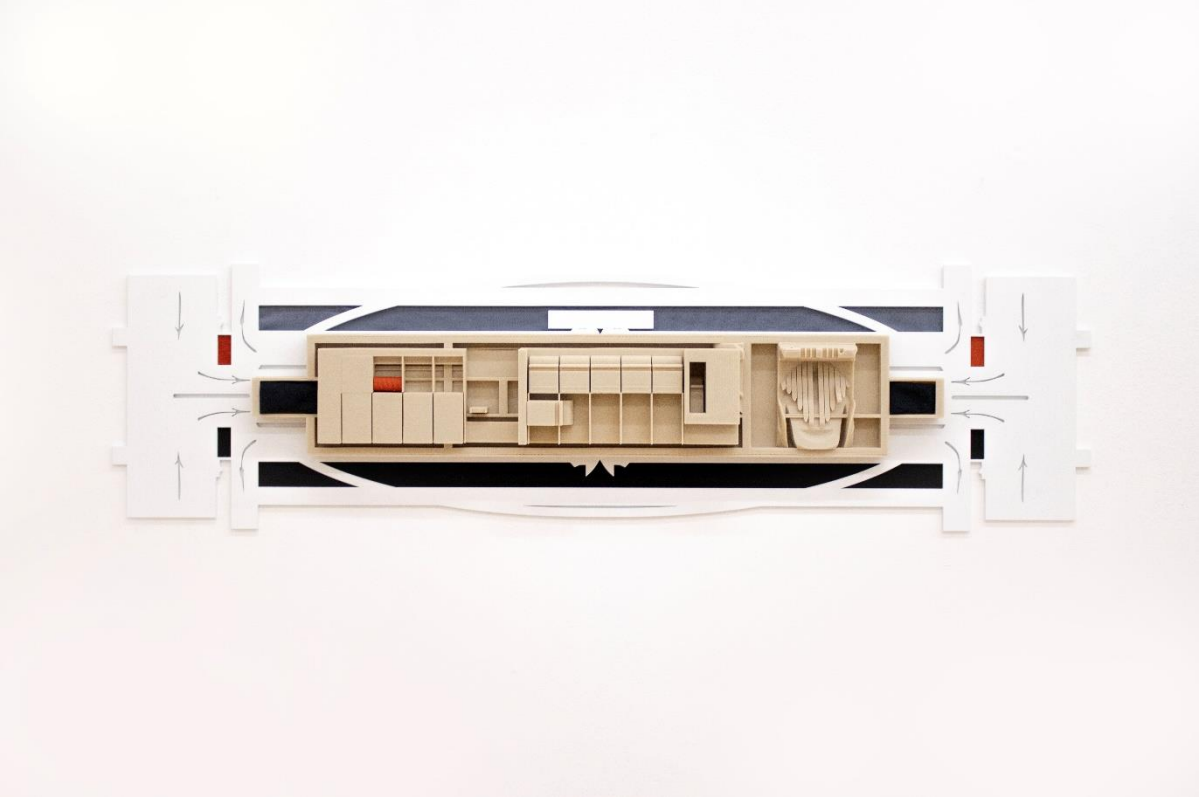

Amba Sayal-Bennett
Ferro, 2023
Powder coated mild steel, PLA, fabric
24 x 86 x 5 cm

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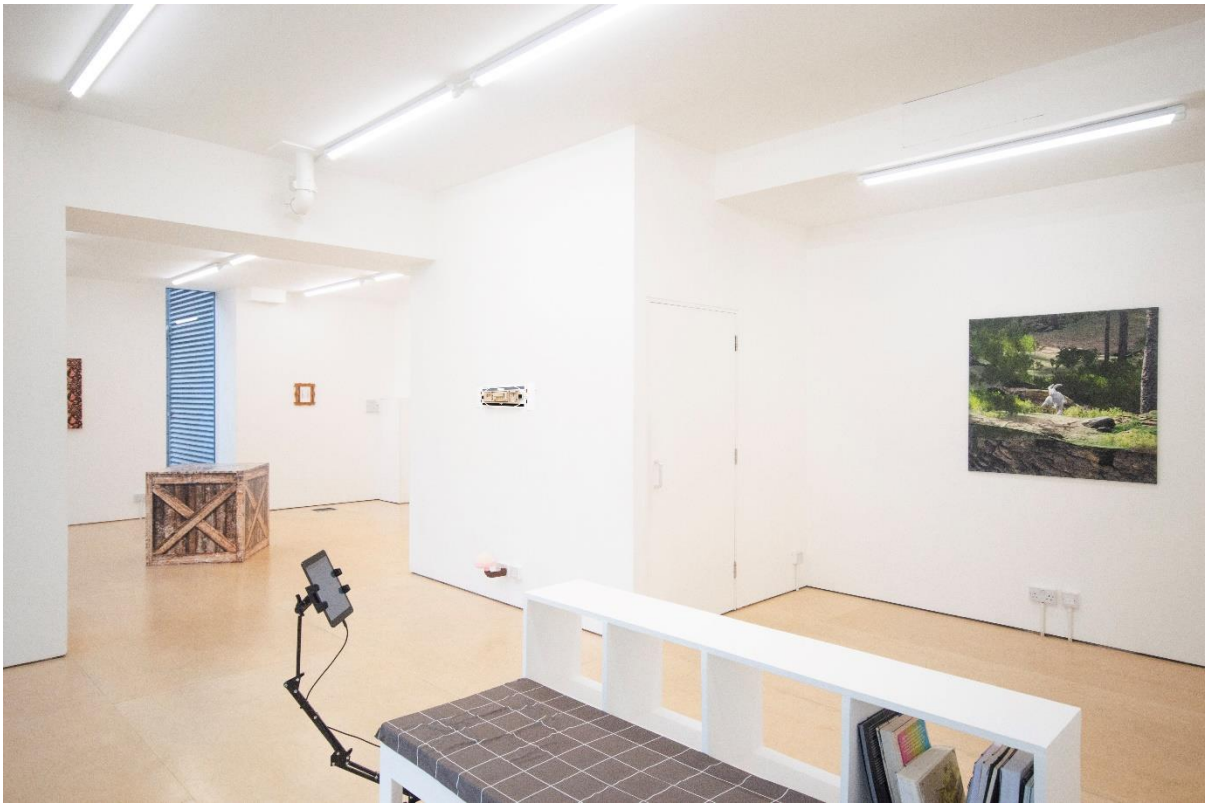

Out Of Bounds, 2024
Installation view

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Installation view

Aram Bartholl
de_dust, 2004
Plywood, timber, screws, vinyl print
80 x 80 x 80 cm

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de_dust, 2004
Plywood, timber, screws, vinyl print
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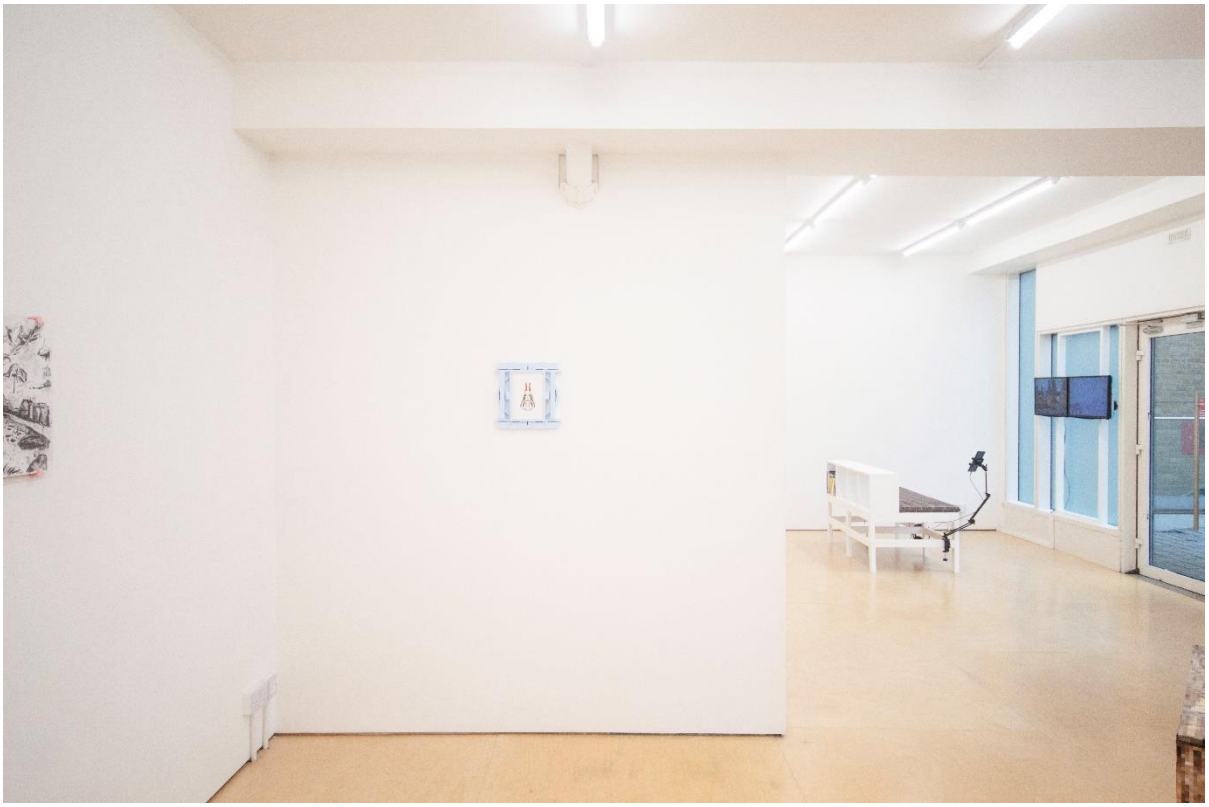

Out Of Bounds, 2024
Installation view

Amba Sayal-Bennett
Syzygy, 2024
Ink, pro-marker and graphite on paper, PLA
21 x 14.8 (29.7 x 29.4 x 3 cm framed)

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Syzygy, 2024
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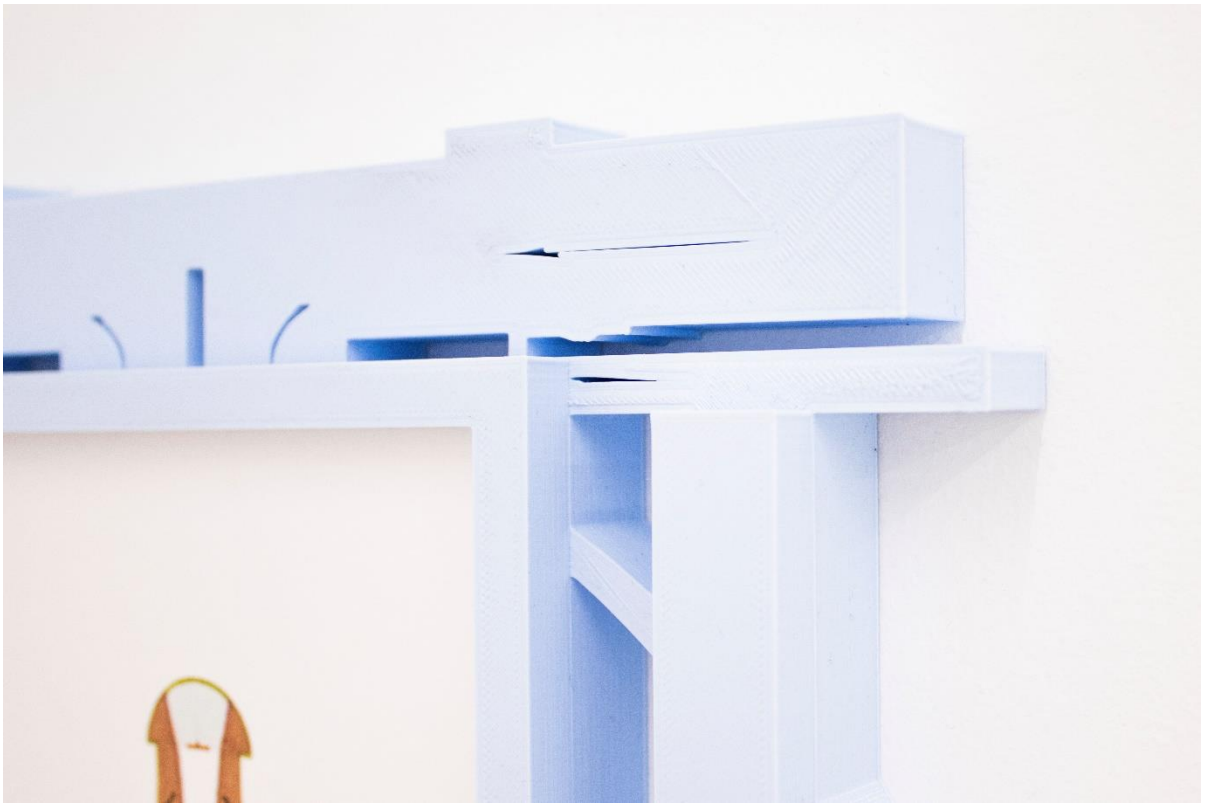

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Out Of Bounds, 2024
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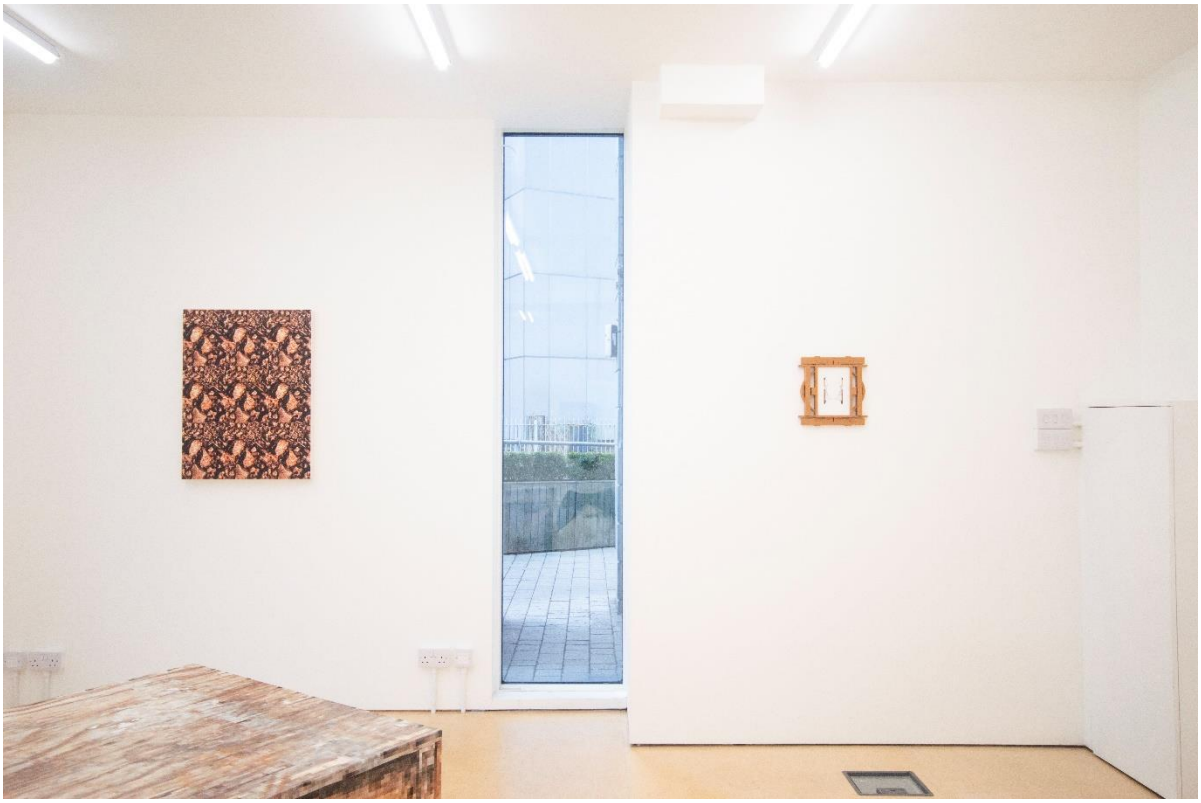

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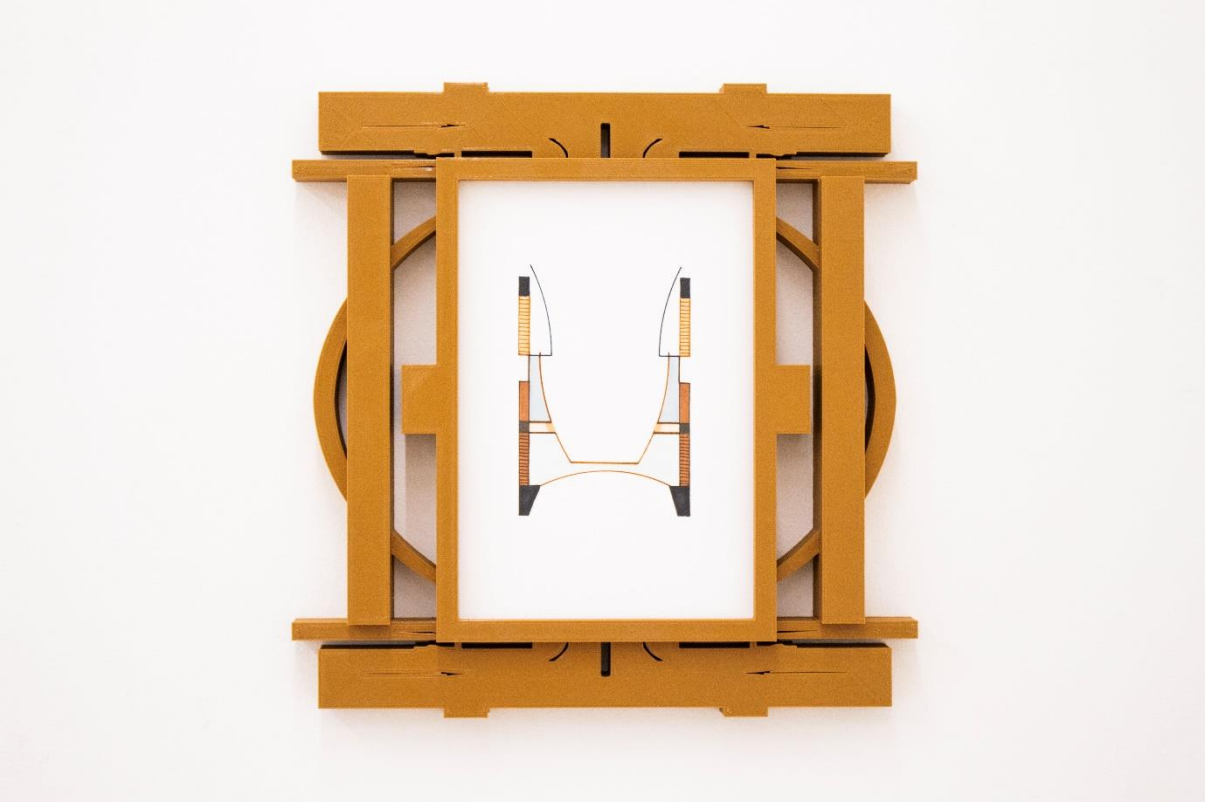

Amba Sayal-Bennett
Softscape, 2024
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Out Of Bounds, 2024
Installation view

Mathew Zefeldt
Surface Texture I, 2023
Acrylic on canvas
80 x 60 x 5 cm

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Surface Texture I, 2023
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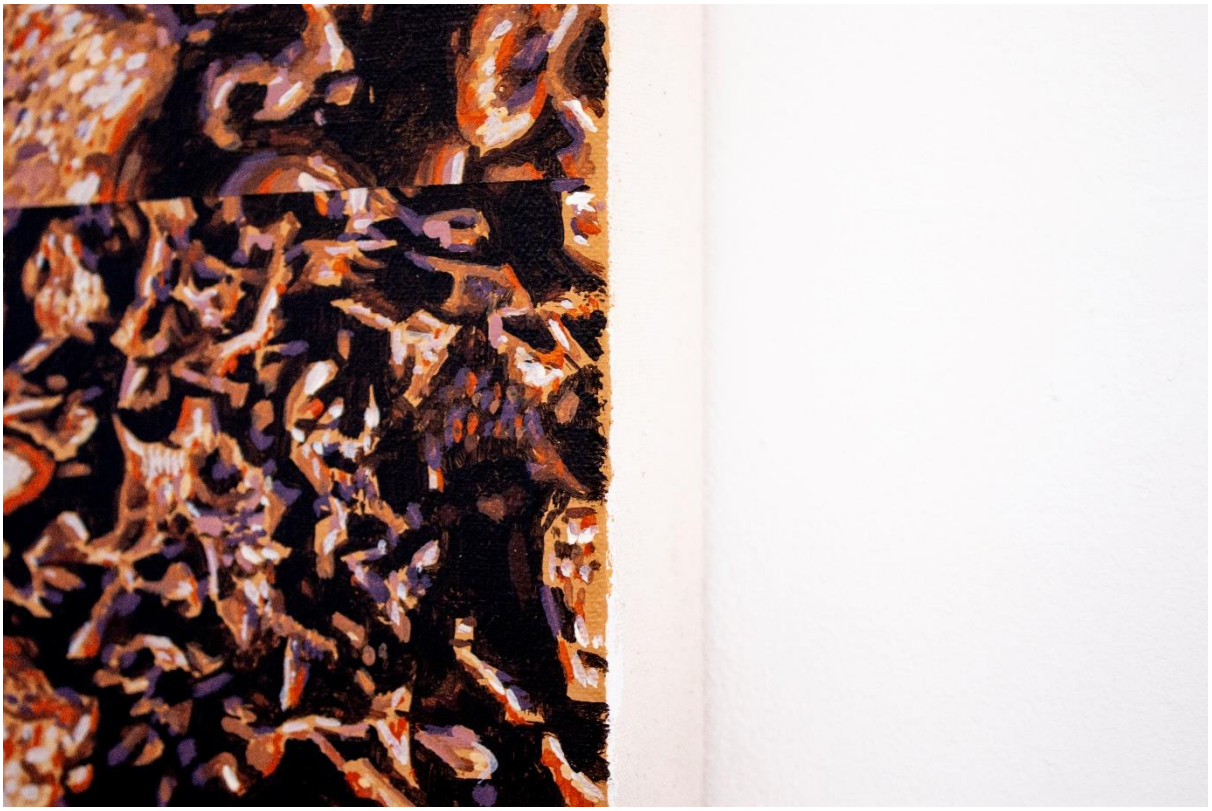
80 x 60 x 5 cm



Mathew Zefeldt
Surface Texture I, 2023
Acrylic on canvas
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