

CITYSCAPES OF NON-PLACES

A B S T R A C T

This text will allow me to elaborate on the works I made in the past seven years, with specific focus on the drawings I made during that time. The paths which led to and from some of the drawings and works in other media seem crucial for better understanding of the logic of a specific work and their evolution, so those paths will be traced throughout the text in order to better explain some of the decisions I made in the process of their creation.

Cityscape series and #CFRP (Cities for Rich People) hashtag appeared as a commentary on the relation between the individual, the *human person*, and the urban space in contemporary context of mixed physical and digital reality. In the section ‘Superreality’ I will try to set the outline of the ideas behind the works in question, their interrelations and links to works by other artists and theorists.

In the section ‘Cityspace to Cityscape’ and its subsections, I will focus on El Greco’s View of Toledo, as an early example of depiction of *genius loci* in painting, Bernardo Bellotto’s views of Warsaw, and Bianka Bosker’s text about *duplitecture* in the recent Chinese architectural design. The questions about authorship, handwriting and labour will be elaborated in the sections ‘The Human Person’ and ‘The Handwriting’, as significant subtopics of my work.

KEY WORDS

LABOUR,
MANUAL DRAWING,
HANDWRITING,
AUTHORSHIP,
DEPERSONALISATION,
NON-PLACE,
JPEG,
URBAN DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

In May 2021 an exhibition *Stop Painting* was opened in Fondazione Prada in Venice. In the accompanying text on the exhibition webpage, the author of the exhibition, artist Peter Fischli identifies five radical ruptures caused by technological and social changes that marked artistic paradigm shifts through rejection and reinvention of painting.¹ The first rupture was provoked by the diffusion of photography. As underlined by Rosalind Krauss: ‘Photography calls into question the whole concept of the uniqueness of the art object, the originality of the author [...] and the individuality of so-called self-expression.’ This is the reason that led painter Paul Delaroche to exclaim for the first time around 1840 the famous and shocking sentence: ‘From today, painting is dead.’ The second crisis is represented by the invention of the readymade and the collage that pushed painting to extend itself and ‘move beside itself in space through objects,’ as noted by David Joselit.

The third one was provoked by the questioning of the idea of authorship, or as defined by Roland Barthes in 1968 ‘the death of the author.’ In any case authenticity and originality issues had been addressed by artists several years earlier. The fourth crisis can be identified with the critique of painting as a commodity because of its mobility, its symbolic value, and its easy preservation in the late 1960s. The fifth rupture focuses on the crisis of criticism in the so-called late capitalist society, as formulated in the seminal studies by Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello. ‘Since the 1980s the idea of an avant-garde became obsolete and dissolved and, again, the end of a critical position in painting was proclaimed,’ as noted by Fischli.²

Since 2015 my artistic practice evolved around the ideas and concepts of urban design though all of the works I made, which over time became a series that were realised in classical artistic media—painting, drawing, video or sculpture. This ongoing series of works was titled *Cityscape*, and later *#CitiesForRichPeople* (*#CFRP*). The five ruptures, pointed out by Peter Fischli, have involuntarily been the five pillars of basically all the artworks from the *Cityscape* i.e., the *#CFRP* series. Their aspects punctuate some of the key issues of the works and I will use these ruptures as anchor points for a more detailed analysis of the works in question.

The size and complexity of all the works from the *Cityscape* series varies, some works are large, but rather simple, others small in size but more complex. Also, the order in which the works were made, in most cases has its own reasoning,

even though much of the reasons became clearer after the works were made. The path which led to a single work, or from one work to another, will be traced in the following text in order to show the logic behind some of the decisions made in the processes of their making.

A solo exhibition I had in the gallery of the Belgrade Youth Center (Dom omladine Beograda) in 2015 may be pinned down as a formal beginning of the Cityscape series (Figure 1, p. 174-175). I titled the exhibition 'Cityscape' and that was the first time I used this word in connection to the works. Consequently, the singular works got labeled Cityscape I, II, III, etc. In Serbian, the title could be translated as *gradski pejzaž* (urban landscape), but I chose the English title because of its precision and simplicity. The exhibition was the result of my doctoral artistic research at the Department of Painting of the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Arts in Belgrade. At the time, the 'Cityscape' exhibition seemed as a certain conclusion, but during the course of the following years, its position shifted, and now, after six years, that show can be interpreted only as a starting point of an ongoing research.

The works shown in the gallery of the Belgrade Youth Centre were large format paintings and small size drawings, in pairs, with each painting accompanying a drawing. The drawings were created after the paintings, serving as their *map*, a layout of painted areas. They were not about the image shown on the paintings, but about the paintings themselves. That said, it is important to emphasise that the drawings were never focused on reproducing the original image of a certain city view. The city view (the *citysample*) emerged through the process of their making as the drawings got finished.

The drawing process is machine-like, going from one step to the next. Every part of the drawings was hand-drawn, without the use of computers or robotic tools, but their character is deliberately made gestureless, as an attempt to make them free of *handwriting*. This ambiguity, of deliberate gesturelessness and insisting on hand drawing is an important element of these drawings. A parallel to the Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin's category of *retrograde remediation*³ can be drawn here, which Pavle Levi mentioned in his book *Cinema by Other Means* (Kino drugim sredstvima). The term *retrograde remediation* gives the character of the works a name, or rather, not the works themselves, but the process of their making. The character of the ambiances shown in my works is emphatically inhuman. Not only emptied of human presence, but designated to exist without humans. The decision to turn to 'handmade' media, such as painting and drawing, while working on this series of works was in large part made in an effort to find balance between the subject matter and myself, the author as a singular person.

The paintings and drawings alike were conceived as gridded structures of a 20 x 20 cm rectangle module. The module is a carrier of a sample - a hand-crafted image of a square shaped cutout from a found JPEG file format. The initial concept was based on contrasting contemporary urban structures of high-rise architecture as spaces of multitudes and my artistic practice of studio-based image making. This relation was from the beginning very challenging, and it opened questions about the position of the 'artist painter', about individuality, character and self-expression. The relation was even more extreme since the 'outside world' presented in my works was not the one I directly experienced, but it was its echo—the digital photos of mostly urban ambiences found through online searches. Each found JPEG used for the works, from the start of the cycle was a found one. Prior to the making of the paintings and drawings I never even had a personal tourist experience of the spaces whose images I used for my works.⁴ This decision did not come out from a protest of any kind, but from the conceptual decision to work on the relation with the image of the world, and not my personal experience of it.

Extracting a detail from the found JPEG formats and using it for the works is a procedure similar to sampling in electronic music. Taking a part of a found media work, and using it literally, or by manipulating its properties, is a practice which can also be found in photography or cinema. Photo and video editing, collage techniques, and various examples from the history of electronic music from the previous century could be used as illustrations here. Sampling in the Cityscape and #CFRP works is used as a procedure meant to create a link between me as the author and the subject matter. This link emphasises the relation of the artist-painter and contemporary outside world as I see it, a specific blend of 'real' and digital space, a specific form of a world as a non-place.

The square shaped cut-out extracts a sample from an image of an already existing structure, be it an urban or a natural one. This pre-existing structure is based on an internal logic, planned or spontaneous. The pre-existing logic of the photographed space disappears once the sample is cut. All the internal connections, urban planning, economic and social links get broken, and the cut sample serves as an independent basis for a new image created through repetition on an orthogonal grid. The gridded structure forms its own links, its own urbanism. The grid also made the surface of the works pattern-like, and introduced possible links to modernist theories of painting, and especially the ruptures which questioned the very possibility of painting in the last 150 years.

1. SUPERREALITY

The ‘old world’ looked something like this: ‘Our everyday life-world consists of concrete “phenomena”. It consists of people, of animals, of flowers, trees and forests, of stone, earth, wood and water, of towns, streets and houses, doors, windows and furniture. And it consists of sun, moon and stars, of drifting clouds, of night and day and changing seasons.’⁵ The internet changed all that. Of course that is an overstatement - and, for example, a century and a half earlier, photography introduced a completely novel elements into the world’s ‘realness’. But, the amount of digital imagery created, uploaded and shared only in the past decade and the way it blended with the ‘real’ world is radically new.

Digital images found on the internet do not get old. They do not fade, get torn or wrinkled. They do not have temporality in the ‘old world’ meaning of the word. Hito Steyerl⁶ defined this kind of files as poor images, as ‘copies in motion’. ‘The poor image has been uploaded, downloaded, shared, reformatted, and re-edited. It transforms quality into accessibility, exhibition value into cult value, films into clips, contemplation into distraction.’⁷ And since the social media platforms appeared, digital images, among other digital content, very quickly shifted their position from an add-on to the ‘real world’ to its almost natural component. What is more, they became a standard of what to expect from the ‘real world’, in many aspects, from everyday life to, for example, architectural design.⁸

Marc Augé first published his seminal book *Non-places – An Introduction to a Supermodernity* in 1992.⁹ His focus was on transitory places, hotels, supermarkets, subway stations, and hospitals in an attempt to define their alienated character and separate them from the real places. Since then, and the chain of landmark events which followed, the whole world started to look like a non-place.¹⁰

Since the appearance of social media¹¹ physical reality and digital world merged into a super-reality. The social dynamics and content sharing on social media have become an integral part of everyday life, no longer separable by the old-world standards. On another level, merging of technology and physical reality have introduced an idea much less theoretical, a *Society 5.0*.¹²

A daily input of textual, photo and video materials on the internet has been on the rise for years now. The number of photos taken throughout the world rises gently in the latter half of the twentieth century, after which it skyrockets. The number of photos taken since 2000 is incomparably larger than the total number

of photos taken since the discovery of a camera until the third millennium. This is explained by the rift between monetary and non-monetary economies. The traditional companies which stimulated the analogue photography, manufacturers of cameras and film, and shops that developed and printed the images dominated the field of photography in the twentieth century. Digital cameras which are now available in most of the gadgets people use in everyday life, and the pricelessness of the photography process in today's world made digital photography literally explode in numbers over the past decade.¹³ Digital images uploaded online firstly acted as the echo of the *real* world, but after the appearance of social media, the boundary between *real* and *virtual* became flexible, and in certain cases even permeable. This permeability between real and virtual is visible in all fields, from everyday life to contemporary architectural design.

More widely viewed, a non-place can be any place, in which the identity of an individual cannot be manifested, apart from the place's function. The architecture of planned functions gains a quality of a place only after a local identity gets built through long term series of personal interactions and experiences. Transplanting or imposing of a constructed identity on spaces only masks their true 'character of a non-place. Since the appearance of social media, the 'old world' notion of a non-place and contemporary endeavours to construct *genius loci* build highly complex relations, which hold an important place within the Cityscape series and #CFRP works.

2. CITYSPACE TO CITYSCAPE

'Landscape is a natural scene mediated by culture. It is both a represented and presented space, both a signifier and a signified, both a frame and what a frame contains, both a real place and its simulacrum, both a package and a commodity inside the package,' according to William John Thomas Mitchell.¹⁴

Landscape, as a culturally defined subject, has appeared rather late in western culture.¹⁵ The first independent images of landscapes started being produced in the decades around the year 1500. A geographer, Denis Cosgrove, saw the shift from 'feudal systems of land tenure' to 'early modern capitalism' as one of the crucial changes in social order which allowed for landscape as a subject to appear. He argued that for 'those for whom land is the fabric of their lives, for whom it is livelihood and home environment, do not see that land as landscape (my italics). [...] Landscape arises increasingly as land acquires capital value, becomes itself a form of capital – a commodity with little or nothing of the

personal value and “social meaning” it had for those for whom it was home.’ Cosgrove’s point was that the ‘outsider’s perspective’ was the one through which land becomes a landscape.

There are several artworks on the subject of landscapes which are promoted as the first ones in Western art. One of them is El Greco’s famous painting View of Toledo.

2.1. El Greco’s View of Toledo

El Greco’s View of Toledo (oil on canvas, 121.3 x 108.6 cm) is one of the two surviving landscapes by the author. It is dated c. 1599-1600¹⁶ and is kept in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum in New York, USA, on bequest of Mrs. H.O. Havemeyer since 1929.¹⁷

On the museum’s page it says the painting belongs to the ‘tradition of emblematic city views, rather than a faithful documentary description.’ The view of the city which the artist chose to paint is a depiction of Toledo’s *genius loci*, rather than the real cityscape. ‘It is a true expressionist work, a picture of El Greco’s own mood, which, by the time this picture was painted, had become so much involved with the character of his adopted town that we can understand how, for M. Barrès (the author of a book on El Greco), it seemed to represent the spirit of Toledo.’¹⁸ The layout of the city is not correct. For example, El Greco decided to put the cathedral to the left of the Alcázar, the royal palace, contrary to its real position.

Louisine Havemeyer, the collector who bequested the painting to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, writes in her memoirs that ‘the high wind clouds gathered and rolled over the lofty city and darkened Alcázar, making its outlines sharp as a silhouette against the sky. Toledo looked to me just as it did in El Greco’s time, when he painted his only landscape which we own and which is called just Toledo.’¹⁹ Louisine Havemeyer’s impressions of Toledo were, in fact, impressions of searching for, and finding, El Greco’s painting in real life. This shift of looking for and finding an image in real life is an important reference to my Cityscape and #CFRP works.

We can also find a similar shift in another larger scale example. Bellotto’s paintings of Warsaw which never existed, at a certain historical point, became a reference point for its rebuilding.

2.2. Bellotto and the Post-war Reconstruction of Warsaw

Bernardo Bellotto (1720-1780), a Venetian born painter of urban views and cityscapes spent almost his entire career as a court painter in Dresden, Vienna and Warsaw. His paintings of Warsaw created under the service of Stanisław II August, the King of Poland, were painted from 1768 until 1780, the year of his death. Even though the style of these paintings is highly realistic, Bellotto added or removed certain architectural elements according to his own taste to make the paintings more appealing.

During World War II, Warsaw was systematically and almost completely destroyed. According to a German war plan, during the World War II occupation, from 1939 to 1945, 80%–90% of Warsaw's buildings were deliberately demolished.

After the war, starting from the 1950s, Warsaw, and especially its old city centre, was rebuilt by the Polish people with the support from the Soviet Union.²⁰ The surviving pre-war architectural plans were used in the process of the reconstruction as well as Bellotto's paintings. The post-war reconstruction process turned the Warsaw's (new) old city centre, in part, into the materialisation of Bellotto's artistic vision. This twist, accidentally, made way for today's world in which digitalised and virtual reality shape the creations in the material world.

2.3. Original Copies

Through these two examples, El Greco's View of Toledo and Bellotto's work, we can trace the establishing of the two-way connections between the space viewed and the image of the space. Coming close to our times, the number of such examples grew significantly, finally exploding with the internet communication, especially the social networks.

A whole series of urban spaces, designed and built according to an already existing squares, landmark areas or singular buildings were recently built in China. This phenomenon was in recent architectural theory labeled *duplitecture* and is predominantly linked to the contemporary Chinese practice of building *simulacrascapes*, 'striking both in the minuteness of its attention to detail and the ambitious scope of the replication.'²¹ This is, of course, linked to the growing of China's middle class' economic potential, and satisfying their economic, but also aesthetic needs. But for this text, the emphasis is on creating a double 'real' city-space, a real-life glitch.

Through vast construction undertakings, the suburban spaces of Chinese cities and towns (Beijing-Tianjin-Tangshan, Guangzhou-Hangzhou-Shenzhen, Anhui, and Sichuan, among many others) were partly transformed into a *simulacrasapes* of the St Mark's Square from Venice, Palace of Versailles or old English towns.

Similar to the use of Bellotto's paintings in the process of Warsaw's post-war reconstruction, Chinese western architecture copies are not one-to-one copies of the original models. They were adapted to fit local conditions – spatial configuration, commercial requirements and local culture. This contemporary architectural phenomenon problematises the notion of a non-place, manipulating some of the key elements of its structure.

2.4. The Drawings

Viewed as a whole, the Cityscape and CitiesForRichPeople (#CFRP) are the titles of a theme, a conceptual frame, regardless of media in which a specific piece was made. In most cases a work from one media led to the new work in a completely different media. For example, a painting led to a video, a drawing to a 3D print, and then back to the painting again. Although not easily separable from the whole, the drawings have their internal logic. They never had a function of a sketch or a preparatory drawing. Rather, they act as a map of the painting. Later, some of the drawings served as a bridge leading towards a spatial form, materialised as an SLS 3D print.

The Cityscape and #CFRP drawings can easily be separated in two groups. A dominantly larger number of drawings is parallel and conceptually similar to the paintings. The structure of those drawings is based on sampling, linear repetition, symmetry or rotation. The other category consists of a few of mostly smaller-size works, which are basically graphic visualisations of the drawing's structure, formal logic, and certain dilemmas which occurred in the work process.

The drawing process is very long, sometimes, on the larger sized drawings, lasting even several months. From the start, most of the drawings had a clear paper space around the drawn area, resembling the printmaking margin. This margin was a decision made in order to present the drawn area as least illusionistic as possible. The goal was to make the drawings not so much about what they show, but about the drawing practice itself and the drawings as products of labour. The focus was put on labour, the only element of singular 'human person'²² left. The drawing process starts and ends in clear processual

conditions. Each line, shape and structure was produced as a conscious act of labour, especially because it was repeated several times throughout the drawing. In order to keep my handwriting as obscured as possible,²³ they were made using Rotring Isograph drawing pens of same thickness, a drawing tool which does not allow much personalisation of the drawn lines.

The first (Citysample) drawings from this cycle were small in size, 25 x 25 cm (Figures 2 and 3, p. 176-177). First exhibited in the Cityscape exhibition in 2015, they were presented solely as reference points to each of the exhibited paintings. In time their production became a regular practice, and their size and complexity grew through a path of small steps. Each next drawing moved the boundary a half-step further and allowed for the next one to emerge. After the first small size drawings, their structure was expanded on the next drawings to two fields, and then to four fields. Those drawings allowed experiments with symmetry and rotation.

The work titled Morgenspaziergang followed the first small sized drawings, opening new paths (Figure 4, p. 178-179). Morgenspaziergang²⁴ is a six-piece drawing created in 2015, consisting of six almost identical pieces, 60 x 100 cm each. Each of the single pieces consists of repetitive structure of fifteen 20 x 20 cm squares, depicting a sample of a photo of the foliage of unidentified woods. The title of the work was borrowed from the homonymous song from Kraftwerk 1974 album *Autobahn*. The song evokes a pseudo-natural environment through the use of electronic sounds. The initial idea was to create a six-meter-long structured stripe, which could be walked by, a drawing – ambience, consciously limited by its size.

Morgenspaziergang was the first large format drawing I made in this series, the first drawing which depicted ‘natural’ environment, and the first drawing through which I openly questioned authorship. Even though the work is presented as a polyptych, essentially, I view it as both, a large format singular work and a cluster, consisting of six almost identical drawings. The six drawings, viewed separately, could be seen as copies, but put together, they act as ‘building blocks’. Also, this was the first work involving several people, who invested their time and energy in its drawing process.

The use of samples I previously used for the paintings was taken further by expanding the drawing format, and then to the point in which two or more samples were combined on the same drawing. That step, unlike the previous ones, was totally independent from the paintings, and introduced an autonomous path for the next drawings.

The subject of urban space is dominant throughout the series. The introduction of the Cities for Rich People hashtag (#CFRP in painting opened possibilities of juxtaposition. Similarly to rebuses, separate paintings made from different samples were put together, creating ambiances like Waterfront or Beach. This was inspired by the aesthetics of gated communities, closed areas built for wealthy people, designed to fulfil all the prerogatives of a posh environment. Luxurious apartment blocks built just across a sandy beach, palm tree groves planted just outside a high-rise architectural complex, moisty green fields stretching across the view from a generic looking residential towers – I shifted the focus from uniform architectural structures to imagined pattern-based ambiances.

In the #CFRP drawings the samples were combined, in pattern-like structures not through juxtaposition of separate drawings consisting of different samples, like with the paintings, but within a single work. The drawings like #CFRP River, #CFRP Beach or #CFRP Cloudcity were the results of such combinations (Figures 5 and 6, p. 180-181).

The mode I work in is in part self-centred. Works grow around other works. Process-led painting or drawing creates its own rules and by following these rules I make further decisions. But, in part it relates to a randomly formed constellation of sources. These sources appear suddenly sometimes, in the form of a fashion show, concert or a movie scene I just saw. For example, the music video for Roisin Murphy's song 'Ten Miles High' released in 2016, was a great inspiration for the symmetrical structures of the new drawings. Contemporary non-places in which Murphy dances and sings in the video, coincided with the subject of the cycle, and triggered the creation of several new drawings. Similarly, the mesmerising music video for Jamie xx's song Gosh, directed by Romain Gavras in 2016, was shot in a contemporary non-place, a simulacrascape in China.²⁵ It became an important reference point and a few years later, a direct inspiration for the What Are You Looking At? video.

3. THE HUMAN PERSON

All the Cityscape and #CFRP works, regardless of their medium, are positioned around the idea of questioning classical authorship, as formulated in Barthes' 1967 essay 'Death of the Author'. The position of the author in the modern sense was the one of the author as a human person, the author as a singular character. 'The author is a modern figure, a product of our society insofar as, emerging from the Middle Ages with English empiricism, French rationalism

and the personal faith of the Reformation, it discovered the prestige of the individual, of, as it is more nobly put, the “human person”. It is thus logical that in literature it should be this positivism, the epitome and culmination of capitalist ideology, which has attached the greatest importance to the “person” of the author.’²⁶

In all the works in the Cityscape series, and consequently in the drawings, I tried to leave as fewer personal marks as possible. The selected images, from which the process starts from are not personal photos from direct experience, but cropped details of the found JPEG files downloaded from the internet. While I was searching for adequate images on the internet, the search was more about the certain qualities of architecture and of the photo, and the least about the context the photo was taken in, or the author of the photo. The drawings I later made are colourless, without visible handwriting, having an aura of a technical product. The use of a technical pen, Rotring Isograph, is a calculated step towards a line which has no direct relation to the pressure of the hand, as would be the case with, for example drawing pens. Nevertheless, the ‘human person’ is built into them by hand-crafting through the labour of manual production. This labour leaves traces in the form of unwanted inaccuracies and irregularities. Unwanted, but inevitable inaccuracy became one of the key elements of these works.

On two occasions, in 2017 and 2021, I produced two animated videos by overlaying the squares, digitally cut from the drawings. The *animation* was the consequence and only possible because of the ‘human element’. The irregularities created in the drawing process generated a motion. Not so much a real motion more of a flickering. If the drawings were robotically made and faultless, the product of converting the drawings to a ‘motion picture’ would be a completely motionless picture.

4. THE HANDWRITING

Drawing process through which the Cityscape and #CFRP drawings are made is based on labour.²⁷ As Isabelle Graw wrote in her text ‘The Value of Liveliness’, in our economy, described as ‘network-capitalism’, *labour* is built into and stored in a work of art. A drawing, for example, has the capacity to ‘seemingly’ capture living labour. Graw adds: *seemingly* ‘to emphasise that the artist does not have to actually touch his or her canvas for this indexical effect to occur.’ This analysis of the ‘labour’ element in painting in her text is tightly connected to vitalist projections on painting (i.e. drawing), even in such practices, as she

writes, as Sigmar Polke's or Gerhard Richter's, which have an 'anti-subjectivist' and 'anti-vitalist' agenda.

The idea that a work of art, be it a painting or a drawing in this case, captures time and energy of its creator, leads to another problematisation of *handwriting*, or the 'human touch'.²⁸ In the example of Frank Stella's Black Paintings, Graw points out his break from the view of the artist as a 'terrifically sensitive person.'²⁹ 'Stella adopted the attitude and habits of an industrial worker,' Graw writes, 'and sought to free his work of "human touch".'³⁰ The conceptual basis and technical procedure for the making of Cityscape and #CFRP drawings to a large extent limit the expressions of my personality. The handwriting is almost totally cancelled, and the only visible traces of 'human touch' are the unwanted but inevitable errors. Calculating with how much errors is too much is also part of the artistic process, and some of the drawings I deliberately destroyed based on such criteria.

Another factor which adds to the problem of identity and authorship in my works is a specific kind of visual noise which occurs in repetitive structures. The patterns which emerged from the repetition, mirroring or rotation of the samples create such a noise. That noise distracts the viewer from the image of the drawings and underlines the facelessness of such urban or natural structures. Also, this noise acts as a filter which additionally conceals the author's handwriting.

4.1. The 3Ds

The grid, profusely used in the paintings and drawings, became a challenge with the first attempts to make 3D objects from the existing body of works (Figure 7, p. 182). The geometry of the gridded Cityscape structures, when analysed as spatial system, created blind spots and glitches, impossible for simple conversions into 3D works.

The renaissance concept of perspective, which projects the image of the world onto a flat plane, operates with three elements – picture plane, horizon and vanishing point. The space in classical perspective painting is shaped like a truncated pyramid laid on its side. The objects, further away from the painting they are the smaller they appear, but the size of the space gets bigger and bigger. Putting several square shaped images next to each other on the picture plane creates a gridded orthogonal pattern, but the space 'behind' the picture becomes problematic when imagined in Euclidean terms. The sides of the pyramids collide and create an overlap, so the path which led to the 3D works went in another direction.

Since the Cityscape exhibition in 2015, the open question lingered around the paintings and drawings on how to create 3D structures based on the premises derived from the 2D works. As with the relation between paintings and drawings, a certain logic had to be found in order to avoid the 3Ds being only about the spatial illustration of the paintings/drawings' image.

The flat plain of a painting contains a projection of an image. In the case of a classical painting, the projection, with more or less the accuracy similar to analogue photography, transfers the lines and shapes, shades and colour from the outside world onto the canvas. In the case of the Cityscapes, the grid creates a glitch in such projections. The 'lines' of the grid, dividing edges of the samples, bind them together in a way it is impossible to do in the physical space. This incompatibility created a puzzle which needed to be solved in order to transfer the 2D works into 3D forms. At the same time the 'grid problem' became a certain *raison d'être* for the 2D works from this cycle – those paintings and drawings could only exist in such a form.

The solution for creating the 3D forms was found in the drawings. Digitally converting them to vectors allowed for each shape to become a plane, and for each plane to become a form with a certain fixed thickness. In collaboration with a young Belgrade based architect, Luka Ilić, the first two 3D shapes were produced following certain predesigned limitations.

They were materialised as SLS prints of small size (Figures 8-10 p. 183-185). The first one, Cityscape XIII, Curved, was produced as a 3D print, and later casted in polyester and bronze. It was made following a painting Cityscape XIII, which had the same rotating sample structure. The rotating samples were introduced firstly in some of the drawings and then in the painting in order to create 'centres of gravity' within the image. Linear repetition from the earlier works created a continual endless structure, cropped by the physical edges of the painting or drawing. The rotations fixed certain points on the drawing and encapsulated their composition. This was a familiar but interesting experiment which, at the end, led to the 3D model of similar structure. During its making, the flatness of the model became an obstacle, and in the final version the model was curved in order to emphasise its three-dimensionality. The conversion of drawn shapes to thicker planes basically only fattens the drawing. Interestingly, the mild curving was possibly the only free gesture that I deliberately made in the entire series by that time.

The next 3D model was created almost a year later, in January 2021. The parameters of the first 3D shape were the same, but the shape itself was made

thicker and the curve was emphasised even more. The second 3D print was produced only as an SLS print, not being casted in other materials due to its complexity and the character of its surface.

CONCLUSION

The paths which led me from one work to the next were in most cases leading to the unknown, even when those paths were walked in small steps. The basis for the whole series was in painting, and all the decisions I made while working in other media were based on the logic principally established in the paintings. The drawings, which I primarily focused on in this text, were firstly made following the paintings, but in the process the drawings became an independent basis for 3D objects. In that sense, I see the Cityscape series as ongoing process-based research, with open possibilities on each side.

The complexity of the subject of urban environment leads me further to topics of another kind. The social relations in such environments and the relations between the positions of power and those of the exploited became my primary focus after the 'Waterfront' diptych (Figure 11, p. 186-187). Under the #CitiesForRichPeople hashtag I started exploring the possibility of juxtaposed images to capture those topics. I found the connections between the samples of urban and natural environments especially intriguing, becoming aware of an internal symbolism or a specific kind of meaning such links can create.

As with the urban samples, the natural ones are also devoid of direct human presence. The human presence is an element I took upon myself as a manufacturer of the works. The work process in the Cityscape series is an almost mechanical procedure with a precalculated minimum of my personal traces. It turns out, contradictory to my initial intention, that those traces are a crucial element of these works, the works about humans, without a single human in sight.

NOTES

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- 1 'Stop Painting, An Exhibition by Peter Fischli,' Fondazione Prada, accessed August 3, 2021 <https://www.fondazioneprada.org/project/stop-painting/?lang=en>.
 - 2 Fondazione Prada, 'Stop Painting, An Exhibition by Peter Fischli'
 - 3 'However, what interests me here is a peculiar version of this process - what may be termed "retrograde remediation": instances of remediation distinguished by some inherent discrepancy, by a pronounced practical/technological inadequacy of one ("older") medium to fully assimilate certain aspects of another,' Pavle Levi, *Kino drugim sredstvima*, (Muzej savremene umetnosti, Filmski centar Srbije, 2013), 66.
 - 4 In some cases, after the paintings were finished I got a chance to visit some of the cities I painted, and those experiences were very uncanny, and demand a separate elaboration.

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- 5 Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci, Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, (Rizzoli, New York, 1979), 6.
- 6 Hito Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen* (Sternberg Press, 2012)
- 7 Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen*, 32.
- 8 James Parkes, 'Joris Laarman's 3D-printed stainless steel bridge finally opens in Amsterdam,' *Dezeen*, 19 July. 2021, accessed 20 July, 2021, <https://www.dezeen.com/2021/07/19/mx3d-3d-printed-bridge-stainless-steel-amsterdam/>.
- 9 'A world where people are born in the clinic and die in hospital, where transit points and temporary abodes are proliferating under luxurious or inhuman conditions (hotel chains and squats, holiday clubs and refugee camps, shantytowns threatened with demolition or doomed to festering longevity);' Marc Augé, *Non-Places, Introduction To An Anthropology Of Supermodernity* (London, New York: Verso, 1997), 78.
- 10 '[...] sometimes I think the world around us is generally reduced to just a handful of archetypal images: a rainforest, Eastern European city, Asian city, etc. Our world is built from stock photos: we repeatedly consume and reproduce the same dozen images.' Anastasiia Fedorova, M.E.S.H. 'The New Easthetic,' in *PSYOP: An Anthology*, ed. Karen Archey and Metahaven (Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 2018), 45.
- 11 MySpace was founded in 2003, Facebook in 2004, Twitter in 2006 and Instagram launched in 2010, just to mention a few. Source: Google search, 20 July, 2021.
- 12 'Through an initiative merging the physical space (real world) and cyberspace by leveraging ICT to its fullest, we are proposing an ideal form of our future society: a "super-smart society" that will bring wealth to the people. The series of initiatives geared toward realising this ideal society are now being further deepened and intensively promoted as Society 5.0.' An annotation explains the reasoning behind the term Society 5.0 as follows: '(Society 5.0 is) so called to indicate the new society created by transformations led by scientific and technological innovation, after hunter-gatherer society, agricultural society, industrial society, and information society.' Hitachi-UTokyo Laboratory, *Society 5.0, A People centric super-smart society*, (Springer, Singapore, 2020). <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-981-15-2989-4#editorsandaffiliations>, xi.
- 13 Hitachi-UTokyo Laboratory, *Society 5.0, A People centric super-smart society*, 126, 127.
- 14 Malcolm Andrews, *Landscape in Western Art* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 5.
- 15 Andrews, *Landscape in Western Art*, 20.
- 16 The Metropolitan Museum of Art's website, on the artworks' page dates the painting in 1599-1600, and the catalogue published in 2003, accompanying the exhibition El Greco at the Met and National Gallery in London dates it about 1597-1599, 233.
- 17 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 'View of Toledo'. Accessed 20 July, 2021. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436575>.
- 18 David Davies, ed., *El Greco* (National Gallery Company London 2003), 233.

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- 19 Davies, *El Greco*, 234.
- 20 Mikołaj Gliński, 'How Warsaw Came Close to Never Being Rebuilt,' *Culture*. pl, February 3, 2015. Accessed 20 July, 2021. <https://culture.pl/en/article/how-warsaw-came-close-to-never-being-rebuilt>
- 21 'Entire townships and villages appear to have been airlifted from their historical and geographical foundations in England, France, Greece, the United States, and Canada and spot-welded to the margins of Chinese cities.' Bianca Bosker, *Original Copies, Architectural Mimicry in Contemporary China*, (University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, Hong Kong University Press 2013), 2.
- 22 Roland Barthes, 'Death of the Author,' *The Centre For Programmes In Contemporary Writing*, University of Pennsylvania. Accessed July 20, 2021. <https://writing.upenn.edu/~taransky/Barthes.pdf>.
- 23 Isabelle Graw, 'The Value of Liveliness' in *Painting Beyhond Itself, The Medium In The Post-Medium Condition*, Isabelle Graw, Ewa Lajer-Burcharth (ed.), (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016), 79.
- 24 In 2015 I was invited to participate in a group exhibition titled *Ferne Nähe – Contemporary Art from Middle-Europe and Danube Countries*, curated by Carl Aigner, at the time, the director of Landesmuseum Niederösterreich. The theme of the exhibition was *A Walk Through Nature*, and the exhibition was meant to be an overview of artists positions towards natural environment. This invitation was the initiator for a large format drawing titled *Morgenspaziergang*.
- 25 'Gosh' video was shot in Tianducheng, a disused tower block estate at the edge of the Chinese city of Huangzhou. *The New Easthetic*, Anastasiia Fedorova, M.E.S.H., MetaHaven, 44.
- 26 Roland Barthes, 'Death of the Author,' *The Centre For Programmes In Contemporary Writing*, University of Pennsylvania. Accessed 20 July, 2021. <https://writing.upenn.edu/~taransky/Barthes.pdf>.
- 27 Graw, 'Painting beyhond Itself,' 82.
- 28 *The Force of the Impersonal Brush, Reflections of Frank Stella's Early Work, Anti-subjective Procedures and Self-Active Paintings*, Isabelle Graw, *The Love of Painting, Genealogy of a Success Medium* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2018)
- 29 Graw, *The Love of Painting, Genealogy of a Success Medium*, 89.
- 30 Ibid.

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PEJZAŽI GRADOVA NE-MESTA

Ivan Šuletić

Ovaj tekst će mi omogućiti da predstavim radove koje sam napravio u proteklih sedam godina, sa posebnim osvrtom na crteže sačinjene za to vreme. Čini se da su putevi koji su vodili do i od nekih crteža i radova u drugim medijima ključni za bolje razumevanje logike konkretnog dela i njihove evolucije, pa će ti putevi biti trasirani kroz tekst kako bi se neke od odluka, načinjenih u procesu njihovog stvaranja, što bolje objasnile.

Seriya Citiscapes i #CFRP (Gradovi za bogate ljude) pojavili su se kao komentar na odnos između pojedinca, ljudske ličnosti i urbanog prostora u savremenom kontekstu pomešane fizičke i digitalne stvarnosti. U segmentu „Superrealnost” pokušaću da postavim nacrt ideja iza dotičnih dela, njihove međusobne veze i veze sa delima drugih umetnika i teoretičara.

U poglavlju „Gradski prostor do gradskog pejzaža” i njegovim segmentima, fokusiraću se na El Grekov pogled na Toledo, kao rani primer prikaza genius loci u slikarstvu, poglede Bernarda Belota na Varšavu i tekst Bianke Bosker o dupltekkturi u novijem kineskom arhitektonskom projektovanju. Pitanja o autorstvu, rukopisu i radu biće razrađena u segmentima „Ljudska ličnost” i „Rukopis”, kao značajnim podtemama mog rada.

KLJUČNE REČI: RAD, RUČNO CRTANJE, RUKOPIS, AUTORSTVO, DEPERSONALIZACIJA, NE-MESTO, JPEG, URBANI DIZAJN

CITYSCAPES OF NON-PLACES

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Fig. 1. The *Cityscape* exhibition, gallery view, Belgrade Youth Centre, 2-14 June, 2015.



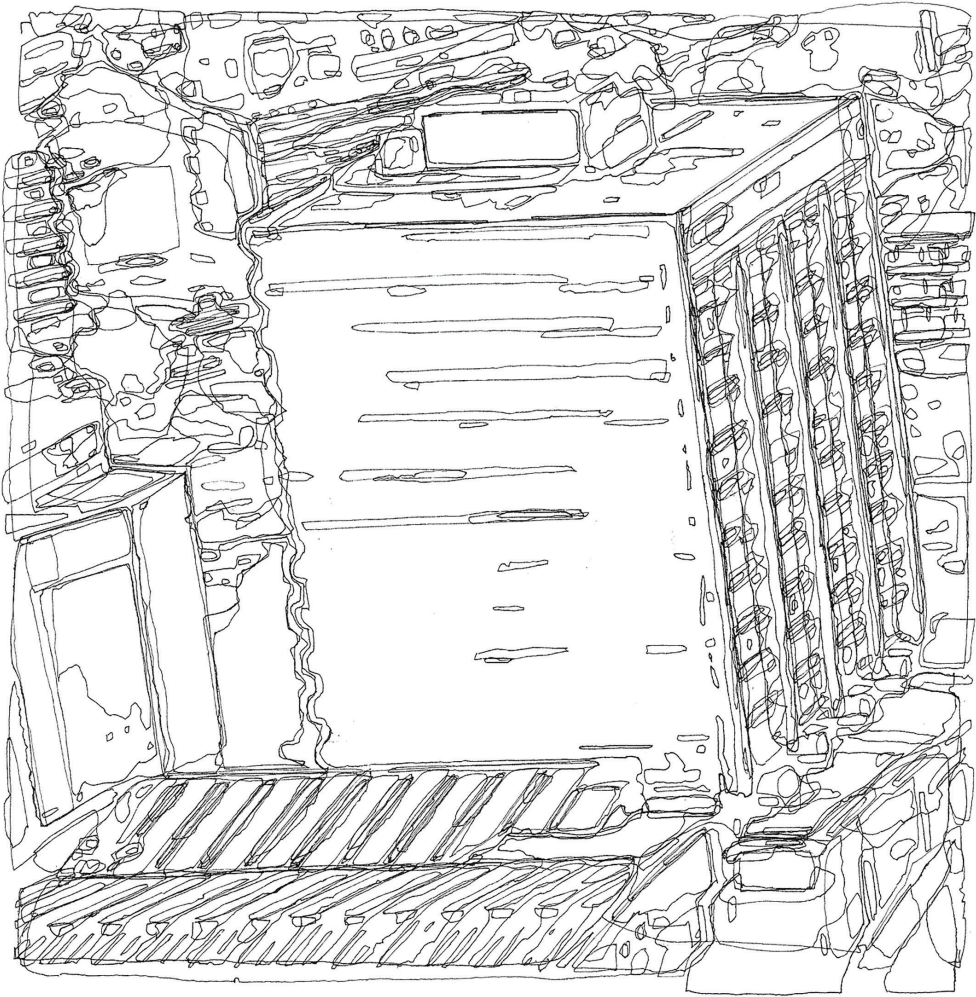


Fig. 2. Citysample II, 2015, India ink on paper, 29 x 29 cm.

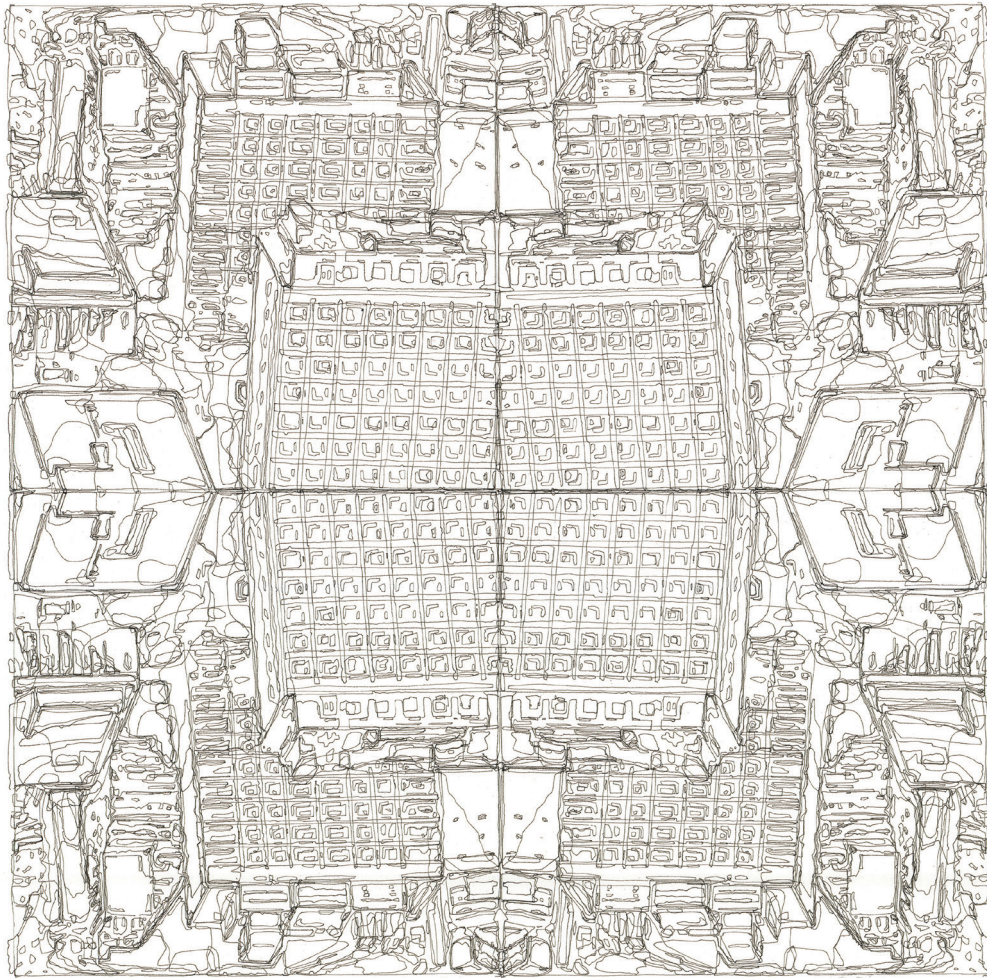
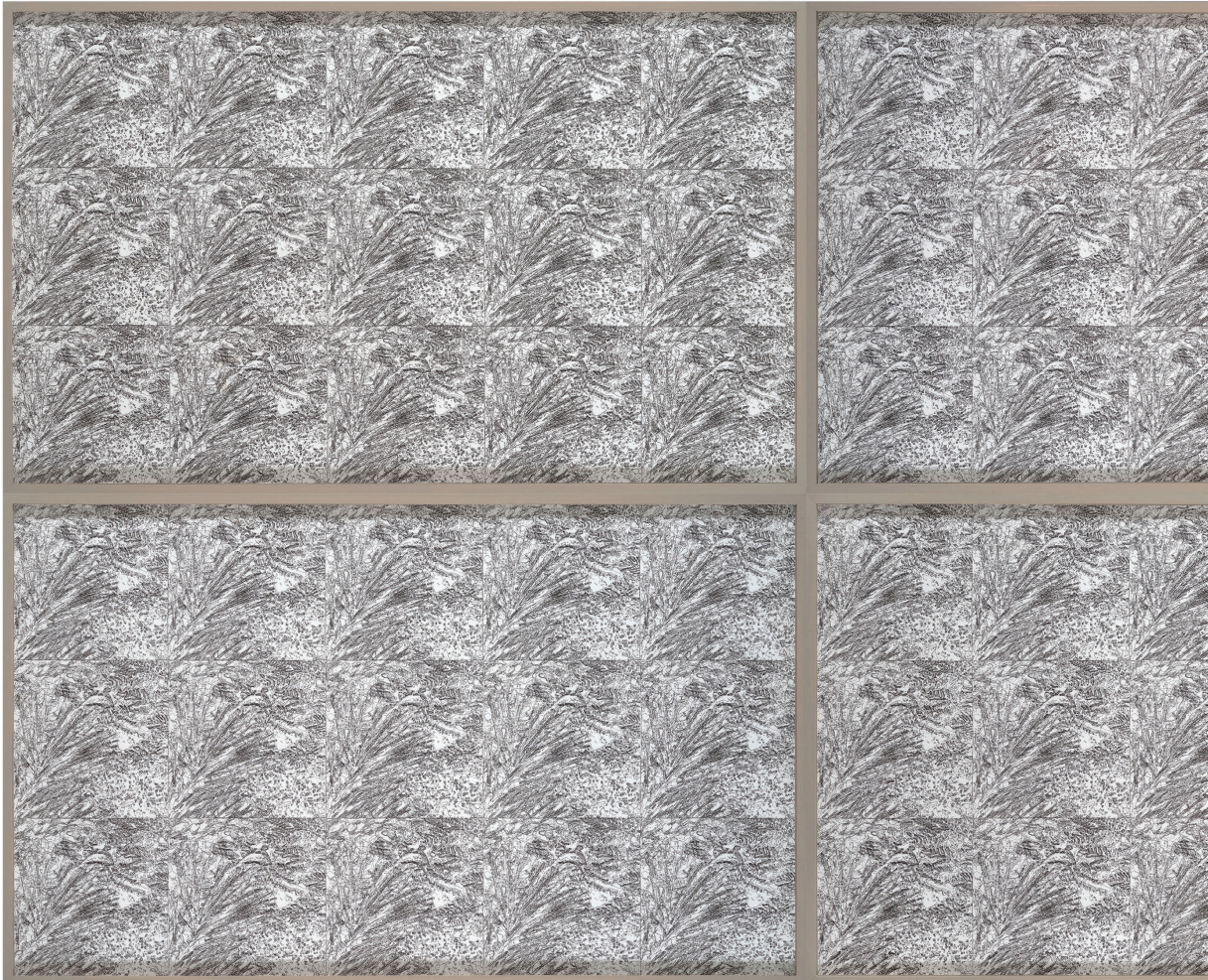
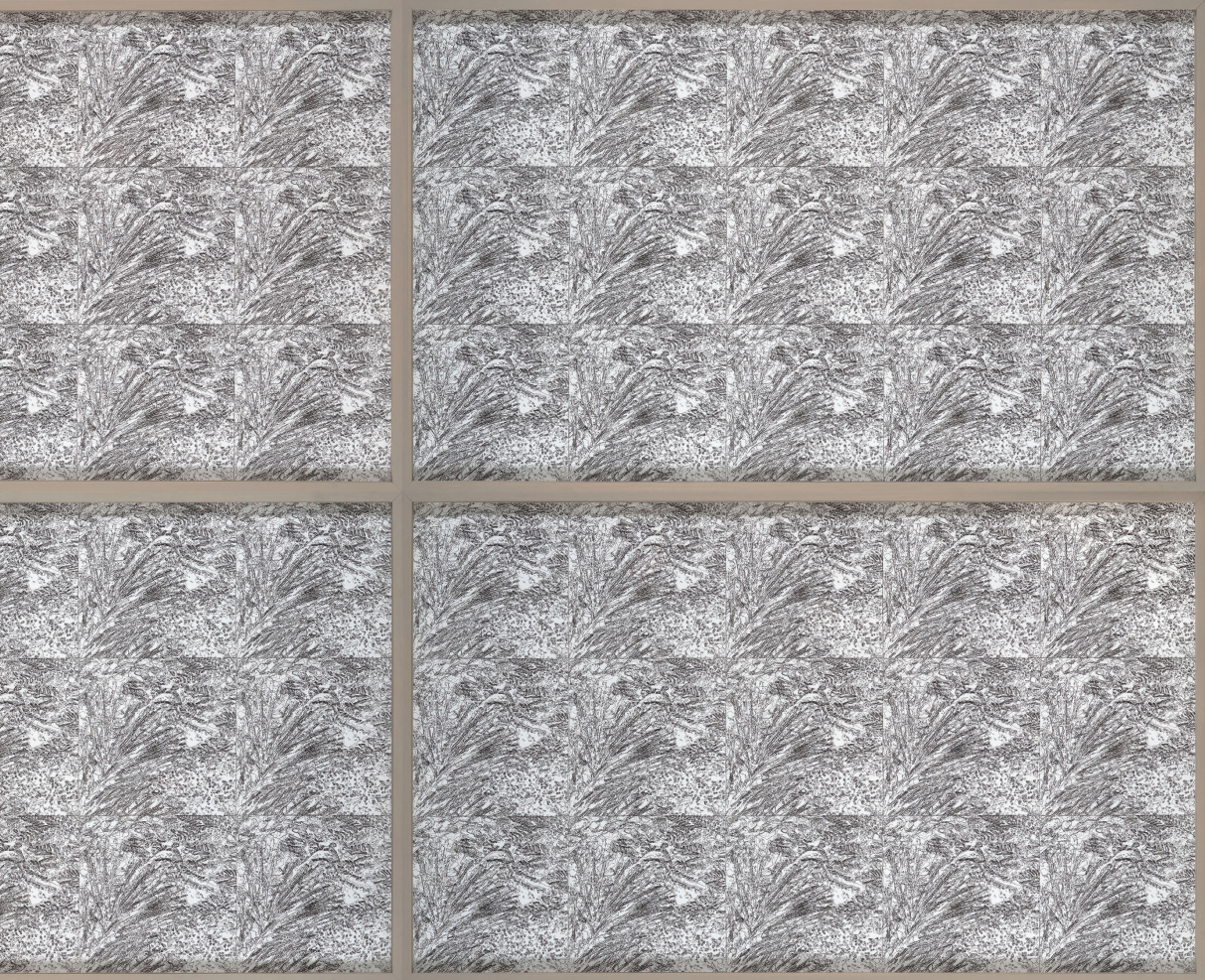


Fig. 3. Cityscape I, 2016, India ink on paper, 50 x 50 cm ..

DOWN: Fig. 4. Morgenspaziergang, 2015, India ink on paper, 6 x 60 x 100 cm.

RIGHT: Fig. 4.1. Morgenspaziergang, 2015, India ink on paper, 6 x 60 x 100 cm.





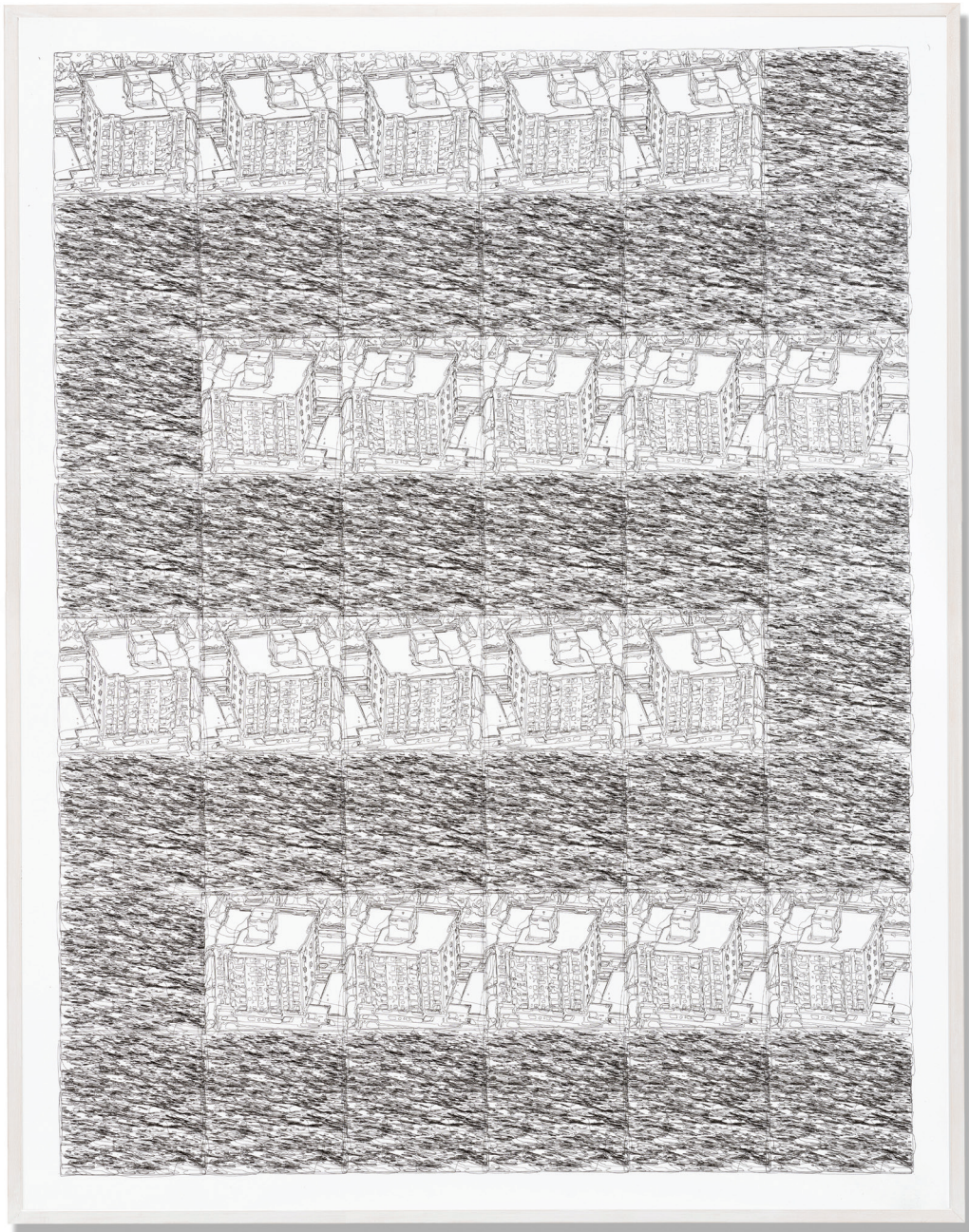


Fig. 5. #CFRP River, 2019, India ink on paper, 178 x 138 cm.

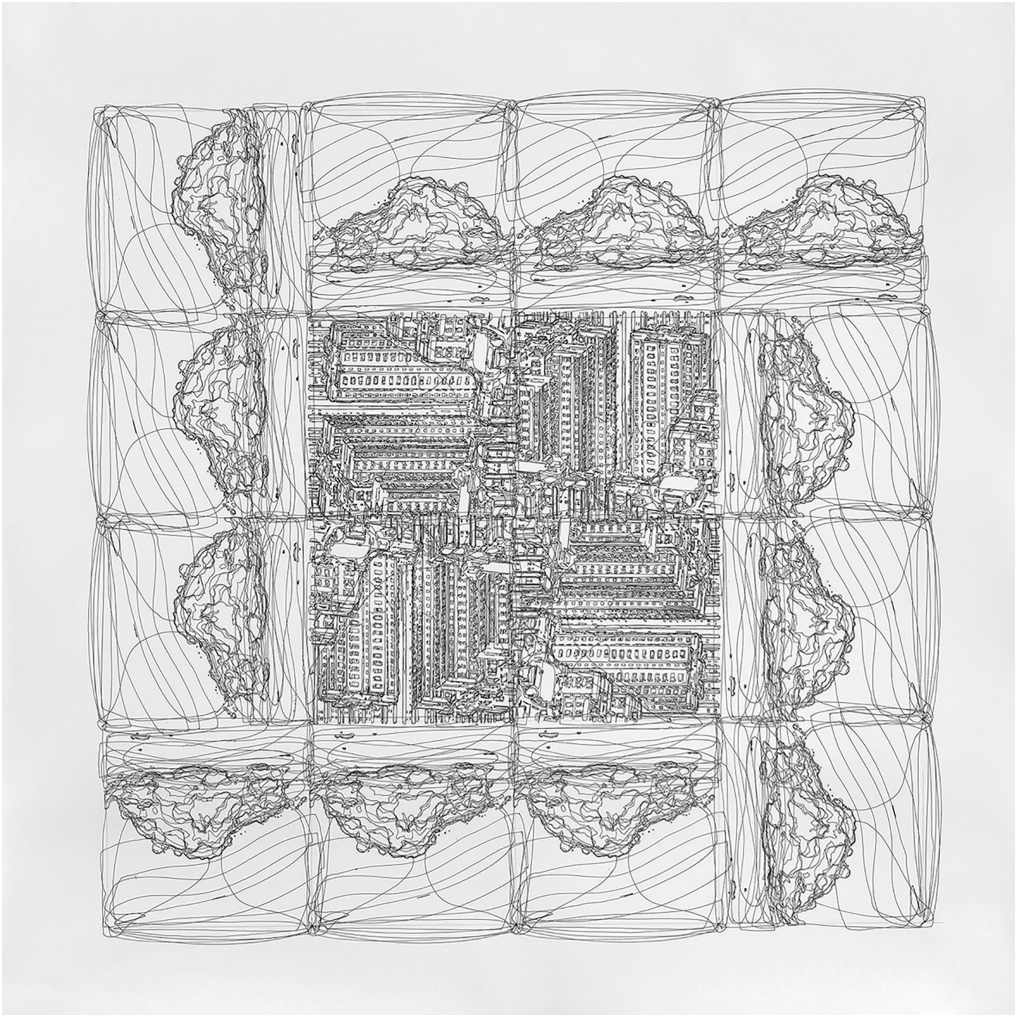


Fig. 6. #CFRP Cloudcity, 2019, India ink on paper, 98 x 98 cm.

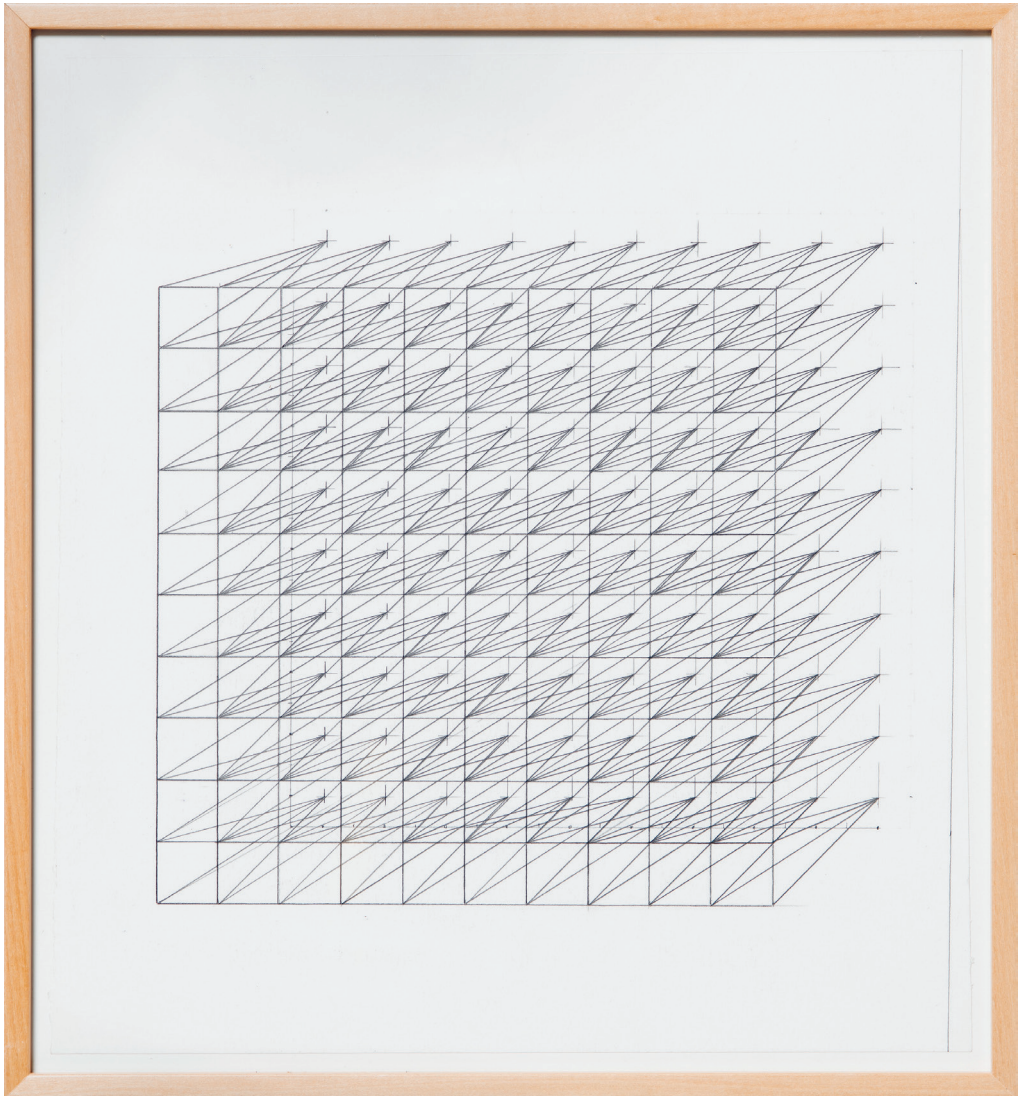


Fig. 7. Grid, 2018, pencil on paper, 32 x 30 cm.

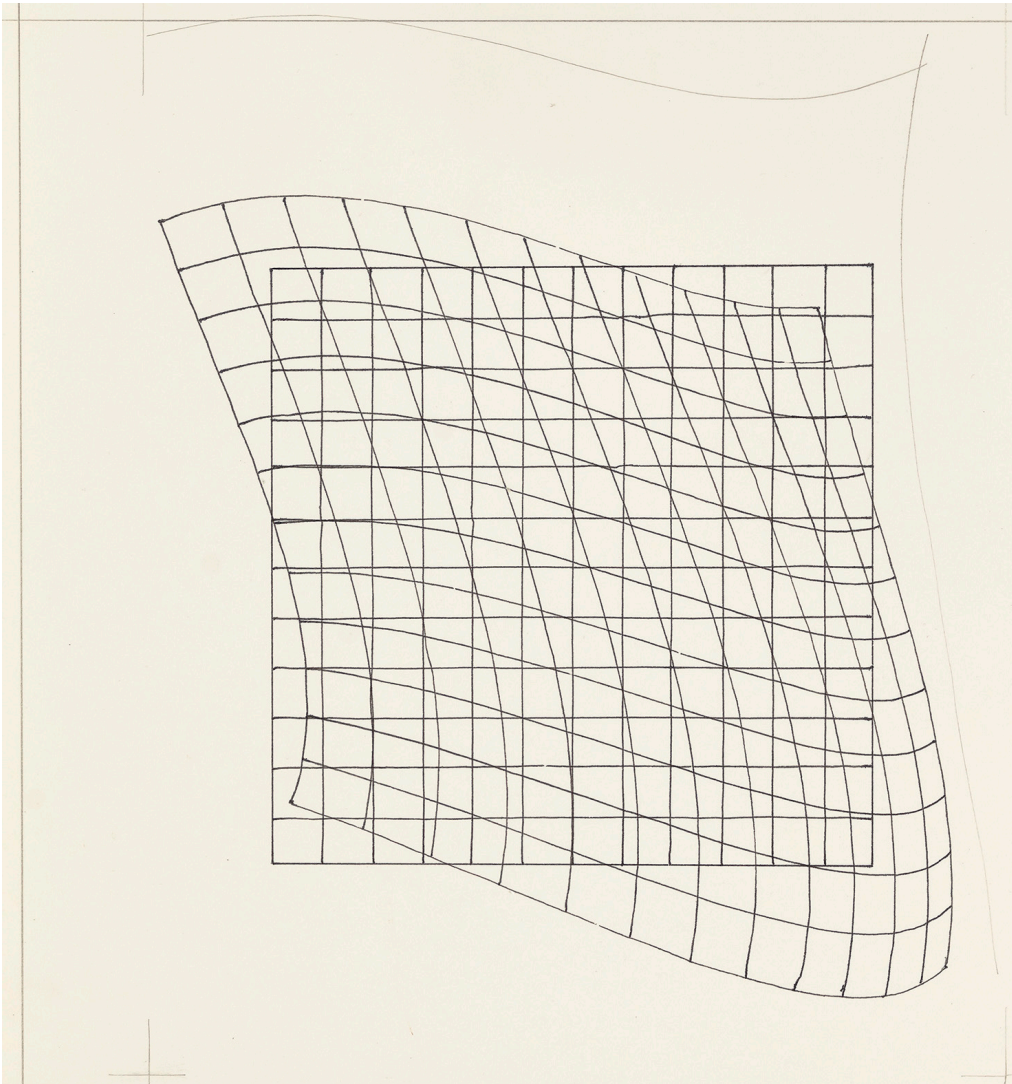


Fig. 8. Curve (sketch), 2019, India ink on paper, 30 x 30 cm.



Fig. 9. Cityscape XIII, Curved, 2020, Polyester, 38 x 38 x 6 cm.



Fig. 10. Cityscample XII 3D, 2021, SLS print, approx. 20 x 20 x 20 cm.

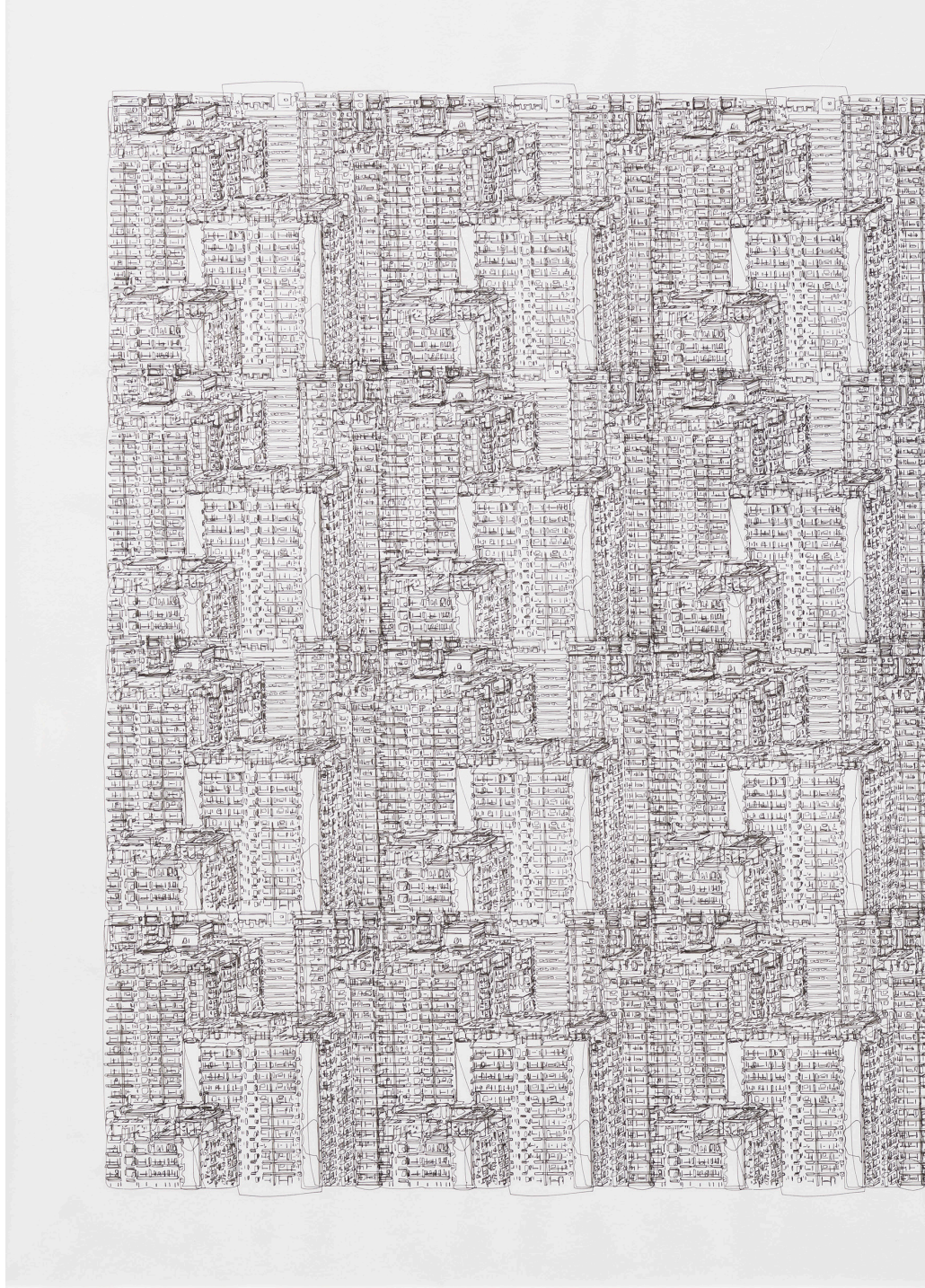


Fig. 11. Waterfront, 2018, India ink on paper, 100 x 140 cm.

