

*Not titled yet (Clifton's)*  
Nicolas Garait Leavenworth

05/07/2012 - 16/09/2012



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# NOT TITLED YET (CLIFTON'S) NICOLAS GARAIT-LEAVENWORTH

05/07/2012 – 16/09/2012

Nicolas Garait-Leavenworth's two sets of works shown at Cortex Athletico reveal the artist's relationship with cultural ghosts, and how these ghosts haunt and interfere with politics, urbanism and the way we live together.

"It would be all in brown, ochre and yellows: a world of slightly dull colors, in carefully graded shades, calculated with almost too much artistry, in the midst of which would be some striking, brighter splashes"

Not Yet Titled, an ongoing series of abstract compositions started in 2005, applies the photogram principle to pure color. In the pitch-black darkness of photo studios he rents by the hour, the artist manipulates photographic sheets of paper under the enlarger, playing with different sets of time and color filters.

At first, one perceives some familiar resemblances to colorfield painters and their descendants. Like pictorial souvenirs, these butterflies images imprint themselves on the memory. Beyond the obvious references, there is a form of jubilation, first through the infinite possibilities of colour variations on offer; then through the freedom of selecting and hanging – creating or unraveling different series – forcing ambiguous arrangements to become evident and drawing new constellations. Not Titled Yet: these titles are yet to be written, our own memories yet to be projected onto these screens – to muse on what they may hold.

"While the point of the souvenir may be remembering, or at least the invention of memory, the point of the collection is forgetting – starting again in such a way that a finite number of elements create, by virtue of their combination, an infinite reverie"

Vis-à-vis, six light boxes hold a series of photographs taken at Clifton's, a cafeteria found by chance while Garait-Leavenworth was in residence in Los Angeles. Since 1931 and the Great Depression, the diner had been a pinnacle of ornamental kitsch, a sort of small amusement park on two floors meant for families, complete with a limeade springs, a sherbet fountain, and even a stuffed deer. Located in seedy Downtown L.A., the cafeteria also served as a rallying point for those in need, attracted as they were by a Depression-era policy of "Pay What You Can, Dine Free Unless Delighted"\*. Falling gradually into disuse, Clifton's was bought in 2010 by a developer who converted it to a trendy French bakery, serving organic food and the like – without the homeless. It is not so much the history of the site that interests Garait-Leavenworth, but the very wicked consideration of heritage in the context of gentrification: the refurbishment of Clifton's is cynical, to say the least, if only through the new owner's statement that he intends to pay tribute to "the spirit of Clifton's original vision," while actually using the memory of the location for a cheap night-club decor.

"... To transport people to a world of imagination, dreams and whimsy – away from the troubles that we hope can be left at the door for just a short while..."

Taken a few weeks before Clifton's closed down, Garait-Leavenworth's photographs show a glimpse of how the coffee shop background once appeared: heavily framed light boxes reflect images of California major scenic spots that have



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slowly been burnt by the years. Lit by the flickers of vernacular culture, Clifton's was a Californian cabaret that could bring the fantasy of the American West to its patrons during the worst years of the Depression. Once more vibrating against the neon lights, these photographs give an idea of the obsessive atmosphere that filled the cafeteria. Bathed in a yellowish light, they represent an uncertain twilight, almost opposite to the colorful statements it faces.

Paul Bernard

\* And it's no surprise to learn that Clifton's was among the places visited by Kerouac in *On The Road*.

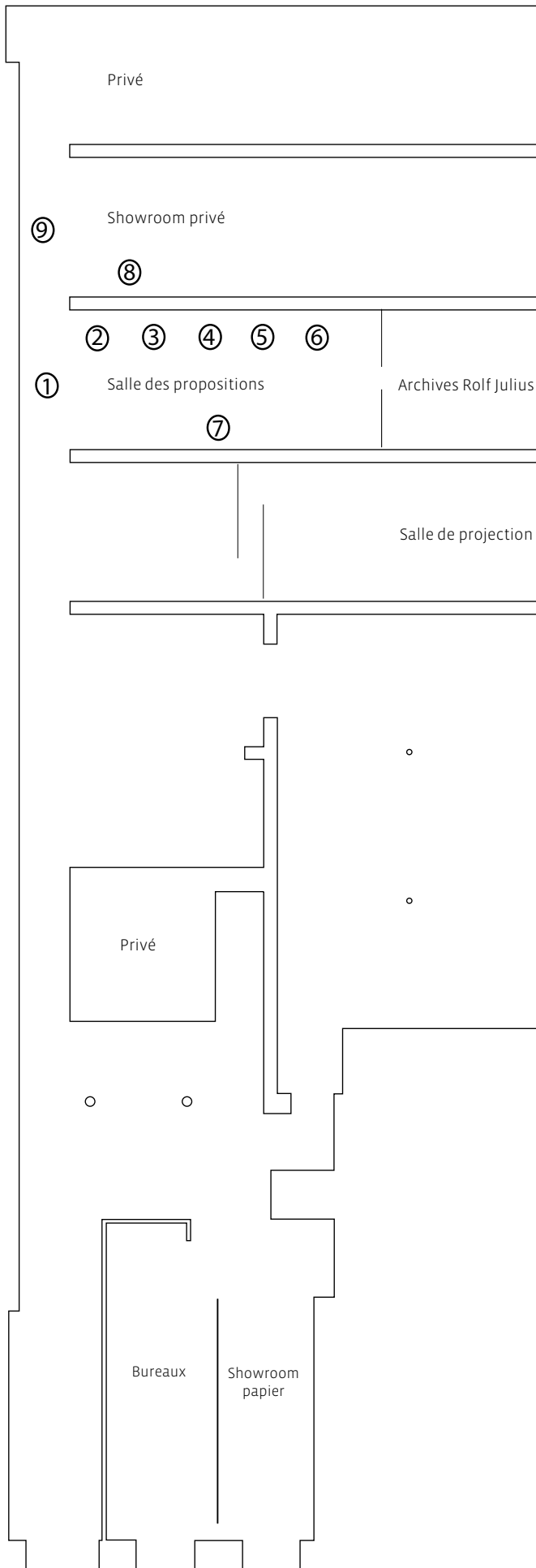
Quotes are extracted from Nicolas Garait-Leavenworth *Understanding Through Peace*, from a text by Allan McCollum dedicated to Allen Ruppersberg and from the "new" Clifton's promotional leaflet.

Nicolas Garait-Leavenworth wishes to thank Dorna Khazeni and Guillaume Landron.  
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# Nicolas Garait Leavenworth

## *Not titled yet (Clifton's)*

05.07.2012 - 26.09.2012

1 - *Clifton's 1*  
2012

Lambda print on light box  
ed 1/2 + 1 AP  
73 x 55 x 12 cm

2 - *Clifton's 2*  
2012

Lambda print on light box  
ed 1/2 + 1 AP  
73 x 55 x 12 cm

3 - *Clifton's 3*  
2012

Lambda print on light box  
ed 1/2 + 1 AP  
73 x 55 x 12 cm

4 - *Clifton's 4*  
2012

Lambda print on light box  
ed 1/2 + 1 AP  
73 x 55 x 12 cm

5 - *Clifton's 5*  
2012

Lambda print on light box  
ed 1/2 + 1 AP  
73 x 55 x 12 cm

6 - *Clifton's 6*  
2012

Lambda print on light box  
ed 1/2 + 1 AP  
73 x 55 x 12 cm

7 - *Not Titled Yet (Paul)*  
2012

Photogram  
Unique pieces  
100 x 75 cm / 50,5 x 40,5 cm / 61 x 50 cm / 25,5 x 20,5 cm

8 - *Not Titled Yet (The square series 2)*  
2011

Photogram  
Unique pieces  
50,5 x 40,5 cm x 2

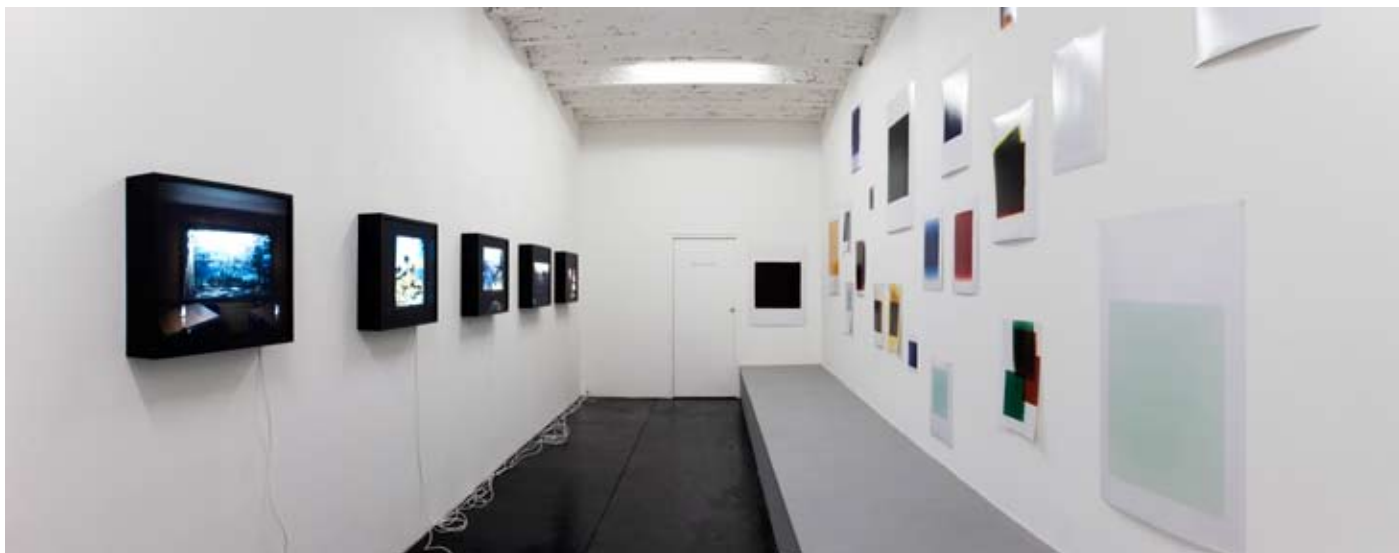
9 - *Not Titled Yet (Flag)*  
2010

Photogram  
Unique pieces  
50,5 x 40,5 cm x 4



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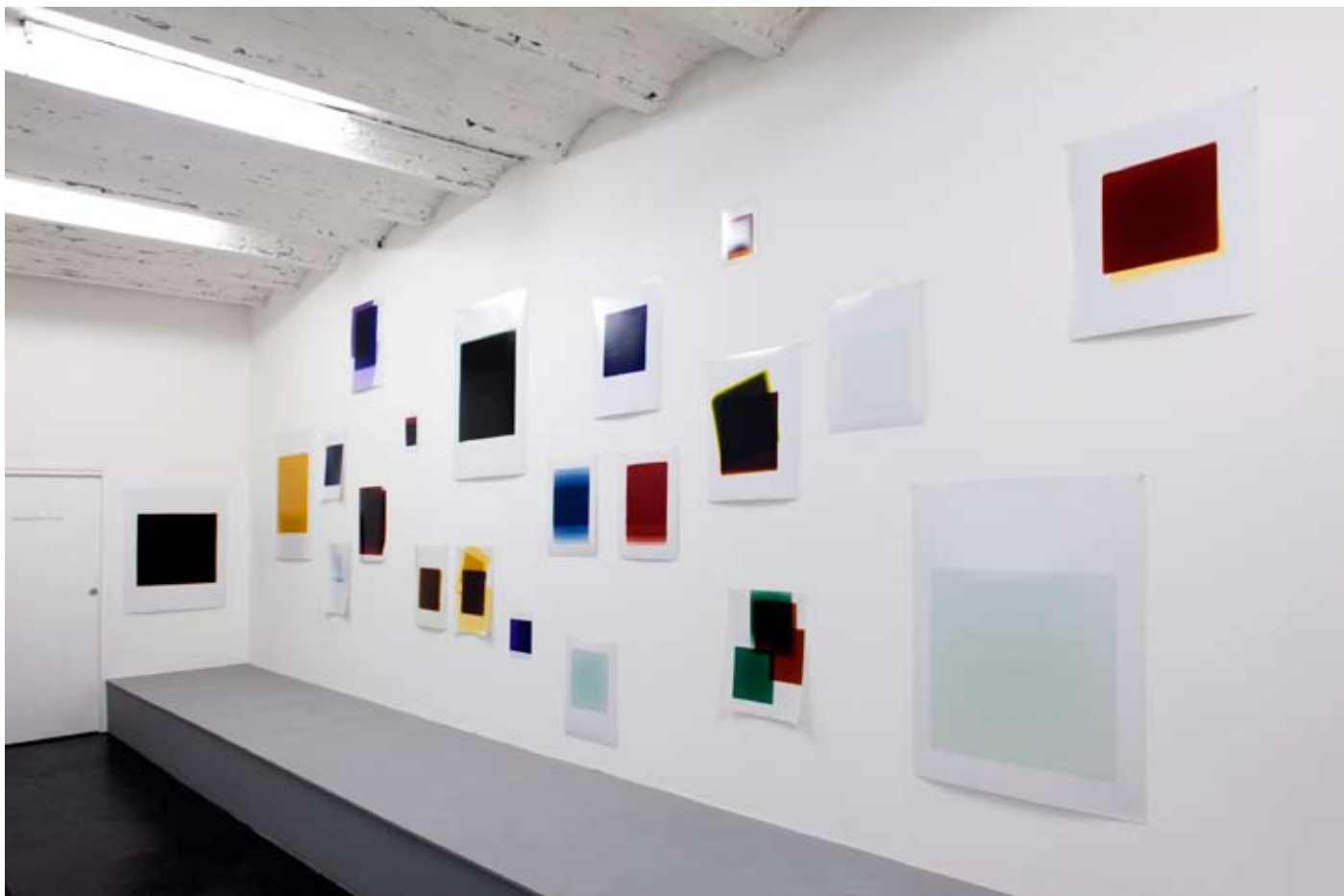
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*Clifton's 1*  
2012  
Lambda print, light box  
73 x 55 x 12 cm  
2 Editions + 1AP



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*Clifton's 2*  
2012  
Lambda print, light box  
73 x 55 x 12 cm  
2 Editions + 1AP



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*Clifton's 3*  
2012  
Lambda print, light box  
73 x 55 x 12 cm  
2 Editions + 1AP



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*Clifton's 4*  
2012  
Lambda print, light box  
73 x 55 x 12 cm  
2 Editions + 1AP



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*Clifton's 5*  
2012  
Lambda print, light box  
73 x 55 x 12 cm  
2 Editions + 1AP



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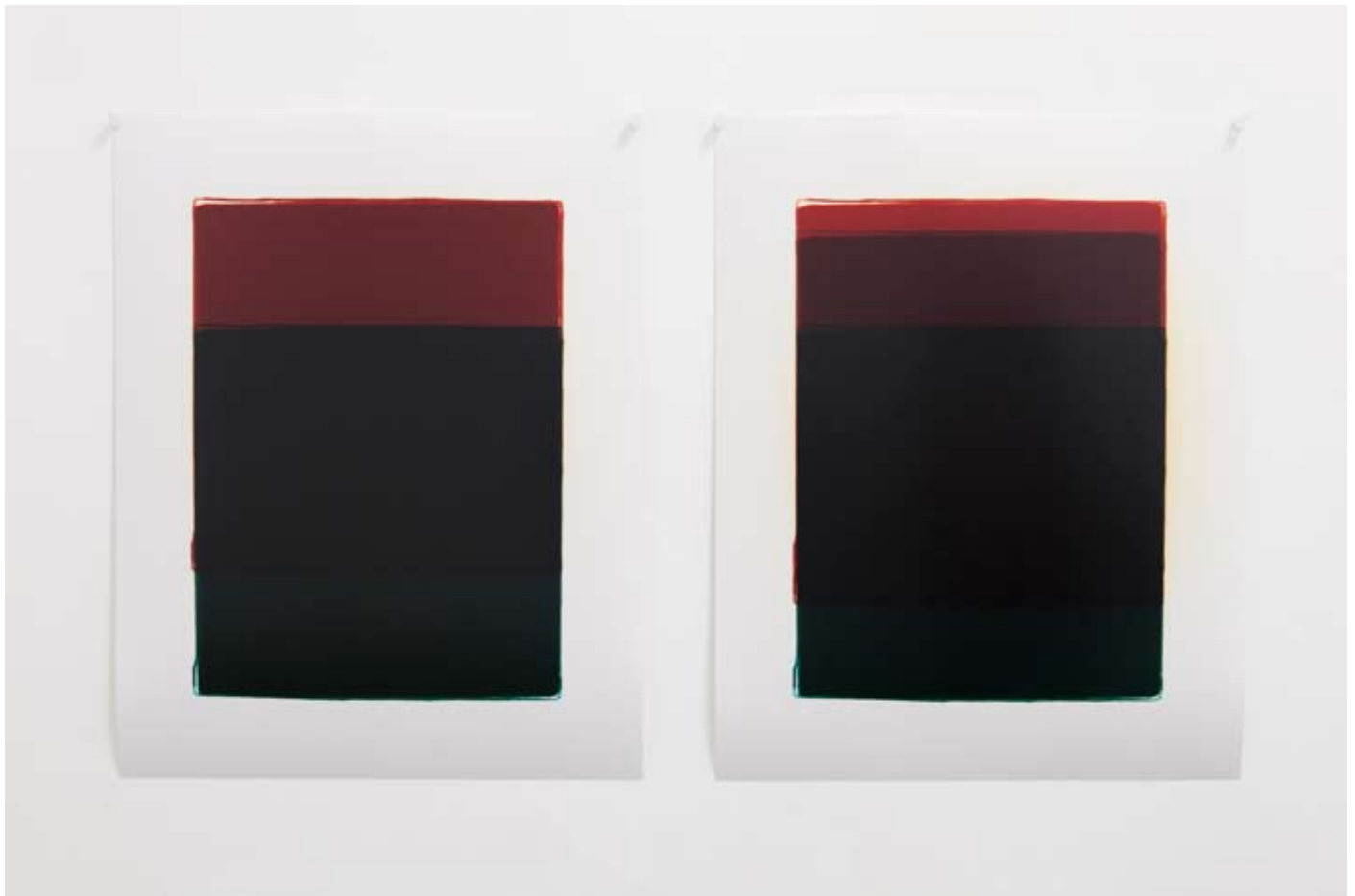
*Clifton's 6*  
2012  
Lambda print, light box  
73 x 55 x 12 cm  
2 Editions + 1AP



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*Not tiled yet (The square series 2)*  
2012  
Photograms  
50,5 x 40,5 cm x 2



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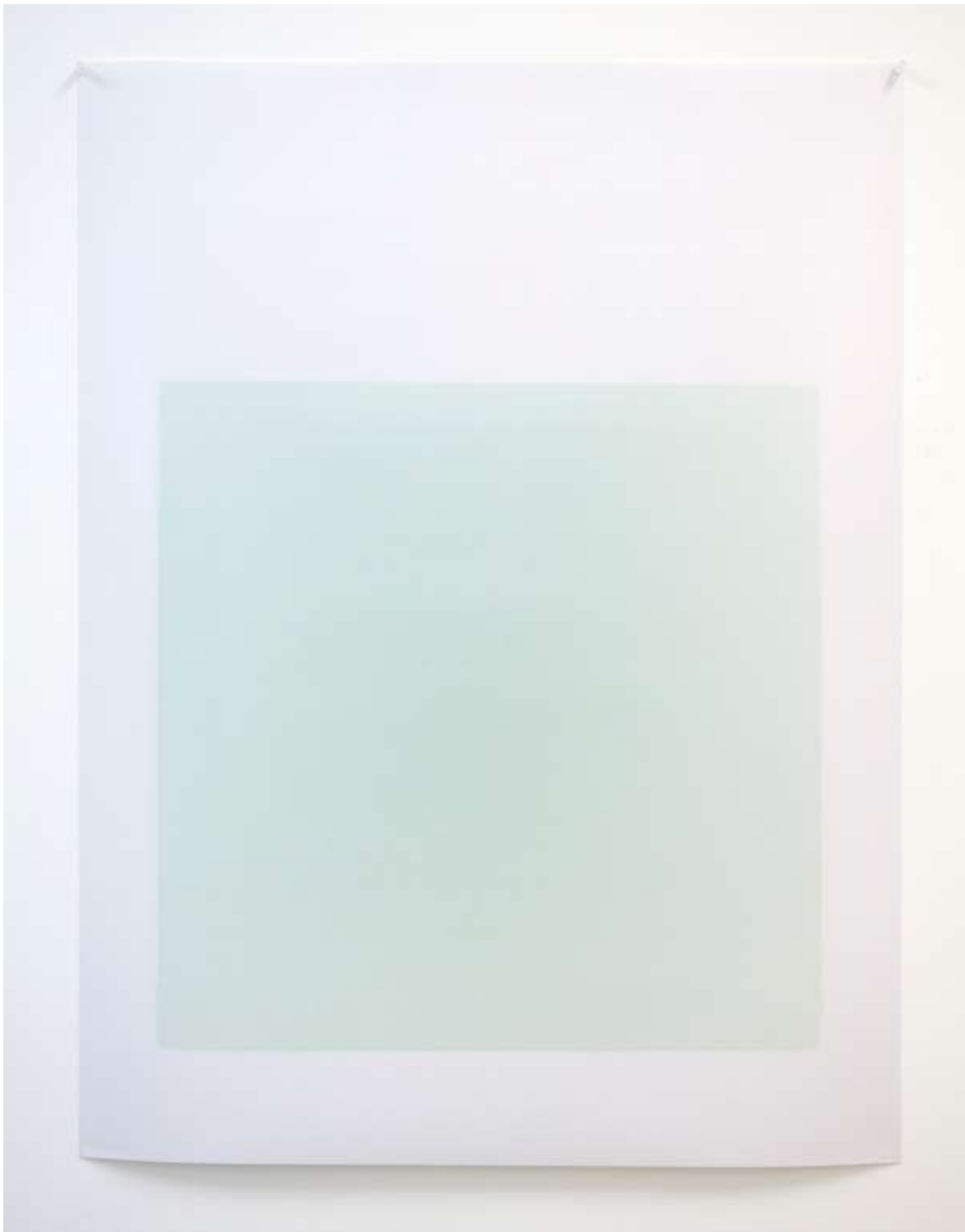
*Not tiled yet (Flags)*  
2012  
Photograms  
50,5 x 40,5 cm x 4



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*Not tiled yet*  
2009  
Photogram  
100 x 75 cm



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2009  
Photogram  
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*Not tiled yet*  
2012  
Photogram  
61 x 50 cm



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*Not tiled yet*  
2012  
Photogram  
20,5 x 25,5 cm



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