

For the love of painting: a world of romance in a flat square

In the Flat Field, an exhibition by Tom Isaacs and Nuno Rodrigues de Sousa

When De Sousa and Isaacs ask, *What if Malevich's Black Square and Kubrick's monoliths were inhabitants of Flatland?* they signal a fundamentally curious and open approach to artmaking. Partly nonsensical, but more parts conceptual seriousness, this is a collaborative practice driven by the contrary beating heart of Modernism, delightfully staged within the obscure science-fiction world of Flatland, an obscure 19th century novella by Edwin A. Abbott.

Visually rife with art historical references, the canon rubs up along popular sci-fi culture and is presented in the orderly language of geometric forms. Every object, and the effort of its arrival in the gallery is personified into a form of yearning for more. Much like the characters of *Flatland*, they are on a quest, animated by the sheer joy of making things and most keenly, a sense of serious play. Just a square, looking at you, looking for love.

Romance in the title is the clue. This is a love affair with modernist painting, down to its ridiculous flatness, and its inheritance of traditions, as varied as they may be. Da Vinci's Vitruvian frames meet Dürer's melancholia under Malevich set to Greenberg and with a bit of surgery and quilting on the side. The exhibition concept is a series of *what ifs*, the works made are inflected with humour and a rather provocative dialogue between the two artists, placing art-historical speculation within contemporary culture.

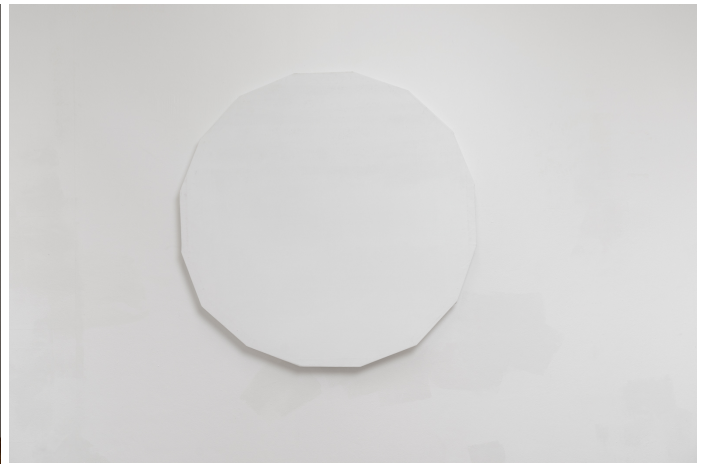
Lisa Pang

August 2024



Vitruvian Ghost, 2024
Single-channel projection. Digital video, 5 min, loop
Variable dimensions

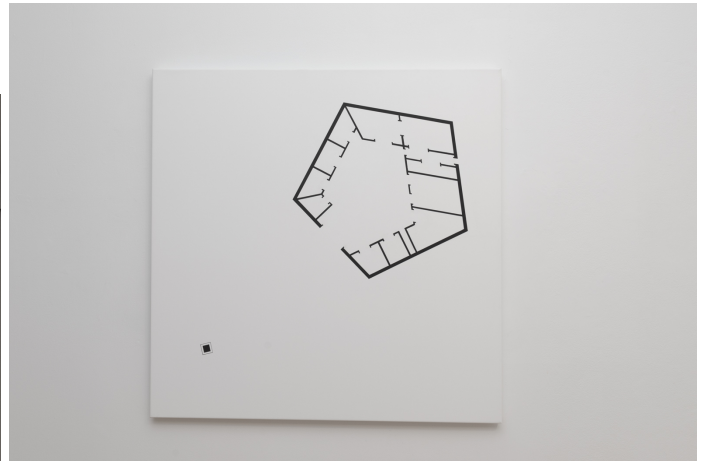
Monolith/Messenger, 2024
Felt, wooden stretcher frame
90 x 40 x 10 cm



Neotherapeutic Operation (First Attempt), 2024
Installation with one painting and video documentation of live performance. Modified shaped canvas: Acrylic on canvas, 100 x 100 cm. Video: Single channel, 1080p, colour, silent, loop.



Monolith/Messenger, 2024
Felt, wooden stretcher frame
90 x 40 x 10 cm



Where are you, son?, 2024
Two paintings: Acrylic and vinyl emulsion on canvas, 100 x 100 cm and vinyl emulsion on vinyl fabric, 5 x 4 cm



Saint Joseph, 2024
Felt, thread, plywood
30 x 30 x 30 cm



The Inner Eye of Thought, 2024
Felt, thread, wooden stretcher frame
40 x 40 cm



The Irregulars, 2024
Archival pen and Indian ink on white tracing paper
159 x 46 cm



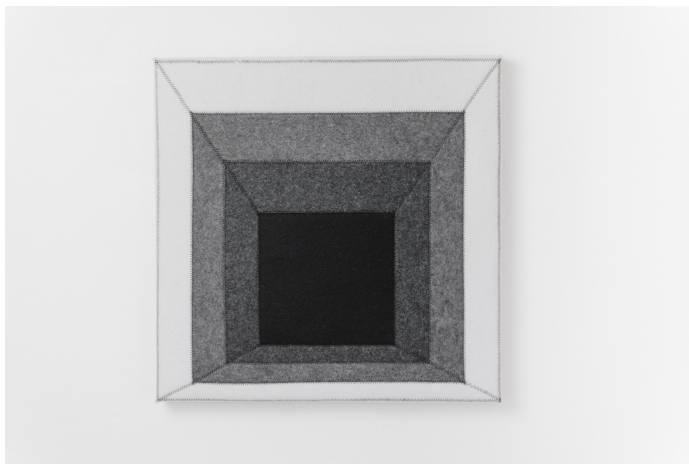
The Flat Characters, 2024
Archival pen and Indian ink on white tracing paper
184 x 46 cm



The Black Pentagon, 2012
Oil on shaped canvas
35 x 35 cm



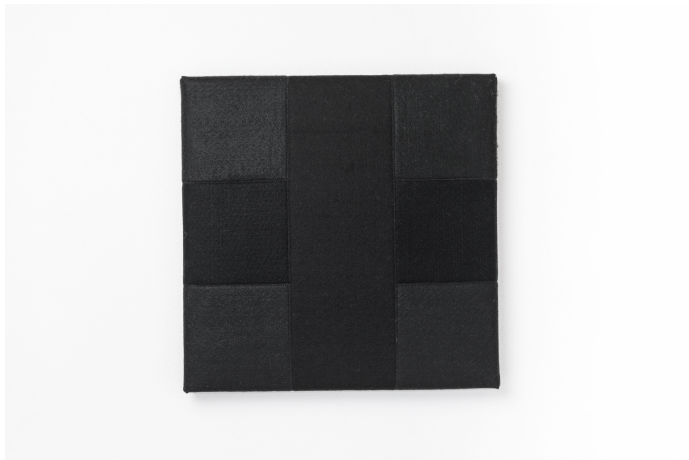
The Rebellion of the Isosceles, 2024
Acrylic on wall
Variable dimensions



Homage to the Hypercube, 2024
Felt, thread, wooden stretcher frame
40 x 40 cm



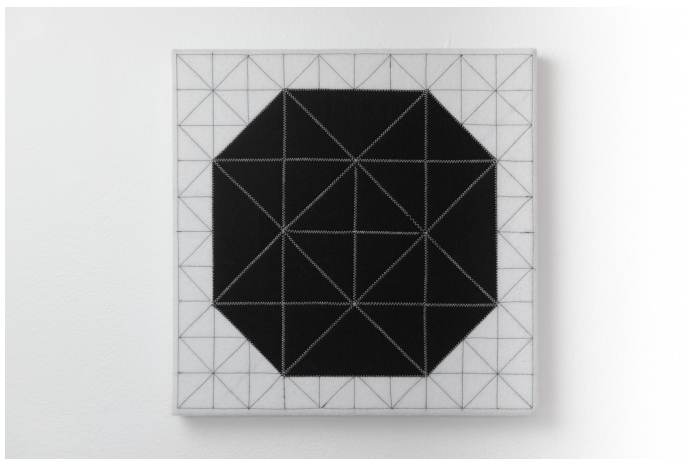
Homage to the Pentagon, 2024
Acrylic on shaped canvas
126 x 123 x 3 cm



Untitled ('et sic in infinitum'), 2024
Felt, thread, wooden stretcher
40 x 40 cm

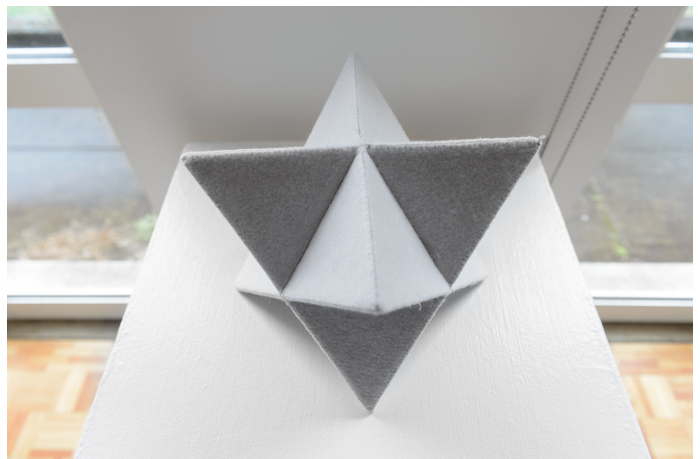


Melencolia, 2024
Felt, thread, plywood
20 x 20 x 20 cm

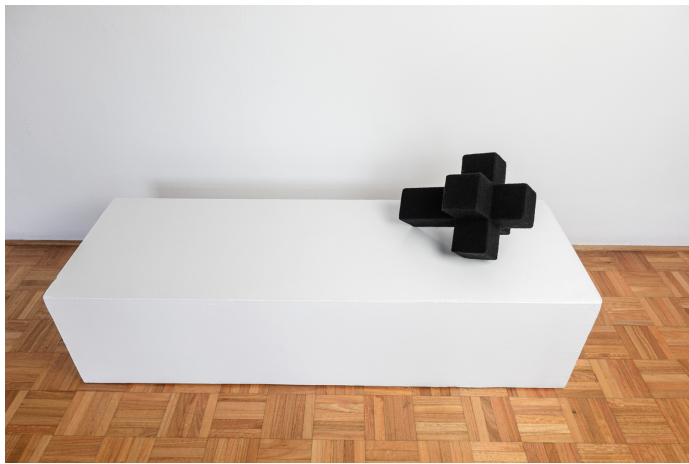


Counter-Composition: "The Argument from Analogy of Figures", 2024
Felt, thread, wooden stretcher
40 x 40 cm

Father and Son, 2024 (ongoing)
Installation consisting of pentagons and squares distributed throughout the galleries. Vinyl emulsion on vinyl fabric.
10 x (5 x 4 cm)



Chariot, 2024
Felt, thread, plywood
20 x 20 x 20 cm



Hypercorpus, 2024
Felt, thread, plywood
30 x 25 x 25 cm



Maze Prison, 2024
Three paintings: Vinyl emulsion and acrylic on
vinyl fabric
143 x 133 cm

All artworks by Tom Isaacs & Nuno Rodrigues de Sousa.

All photos by Alex Wisser.