

On Being Transparent

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On Being Transparent

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Thanks to

My Father

My Mother

Maya Lusky

Suzanne McClelland

Miguel Luciano

Rico Gatson

Tsibi Geva

Ken Landauer

James Sienna

David Row

Perry Bard

Pedro Mesa

Cela luz

Deena Lusky

Ellie Danker



What does it mean to be transparent? To me, it means to constantly ask myself questions about honesty; questions that don't necessarily have answers. I inquire to stay aware. Being transparent to me is not only just saying everything and being exposed to the world, being transparent is slowly being self-aware even when it is scary –accepting everything about me even if it's not a “good” quality–, even if it's something that I think is an obstacle within me. Acknowledging myself and being comfortable with my body, my wisdom, my thoughts and art to then share it with someone else; someone who is willing to accept all the scars and scratches, all the flows and see their beauty. That is how I want to be transparent, by peeling the layers off to the very core. Exposing myself to others in that sense can be dangerous. It can hurt me, my security, my feelings and my trust. It can hurt in a way that will stay forever. It can take only one person to scar you when you're exposed, only one person to be transparent with, and that's enough. I draw from these experiences and focus it in my work; this way, it can connect to the people who are willing to take the time to expose themselves as well to feel it.

A few years ago, I was heartbroken for a long time. I couldn't recover and cure myself of the pain of it. I stopped making Art for a while because I was yet to know that making Art will be the way to heal my pain; the pain that was emotional and physical at the same time. Then I found my grandfather's old factory space that had been abandoned for 25 years, and slowly started to clean and arrange it to become a place for me to work and have a studio. The moment I started working for myself –creating work which was like a sponge, absorbing all my sadness– I realized that this is the only thing I can do to feel less sad and heartbroken. I built my new strength from scratch through the creative process which made me much stronger than what I was before. Since that moment I started to do Art seriously, to mean everything I create.

I have been exploring safety glass as both material and metaphor. Safety glass is made up from two layers of glass unified by a layer of glue. When safety glass is hit by a strong force, it doesn't break into pieces —it shatters into a cracked surface. The once rigid surface can then be bent. It becomes alive —dangerous— but also pliable. The glass is in its most natural state when unbroken; It is the safe object intended to be free of imperfections, dust, or danger. But like a relationship, it is more real, alive, and true to itself when subjected to pressure.

As I break the glass, I am helping it to be vulnerable and fragile.





If vulnerability means that a person is susceptible to physical or emotional harm, then my work embraces the possibilities for strength in that situation.

I wanted to be the qualities that I saw in the relations of the pieces of the broken glass; to be fragile yet strong, transparent yet scarred, dangerous but gentle, broken yet constructed, imperfect and beautiful. I wanted to show those fine lines between those qualities and how just too much of one of them can destroy the other; how much the balance is necessary; how much their relationship is important; leaning against and supporting each other.



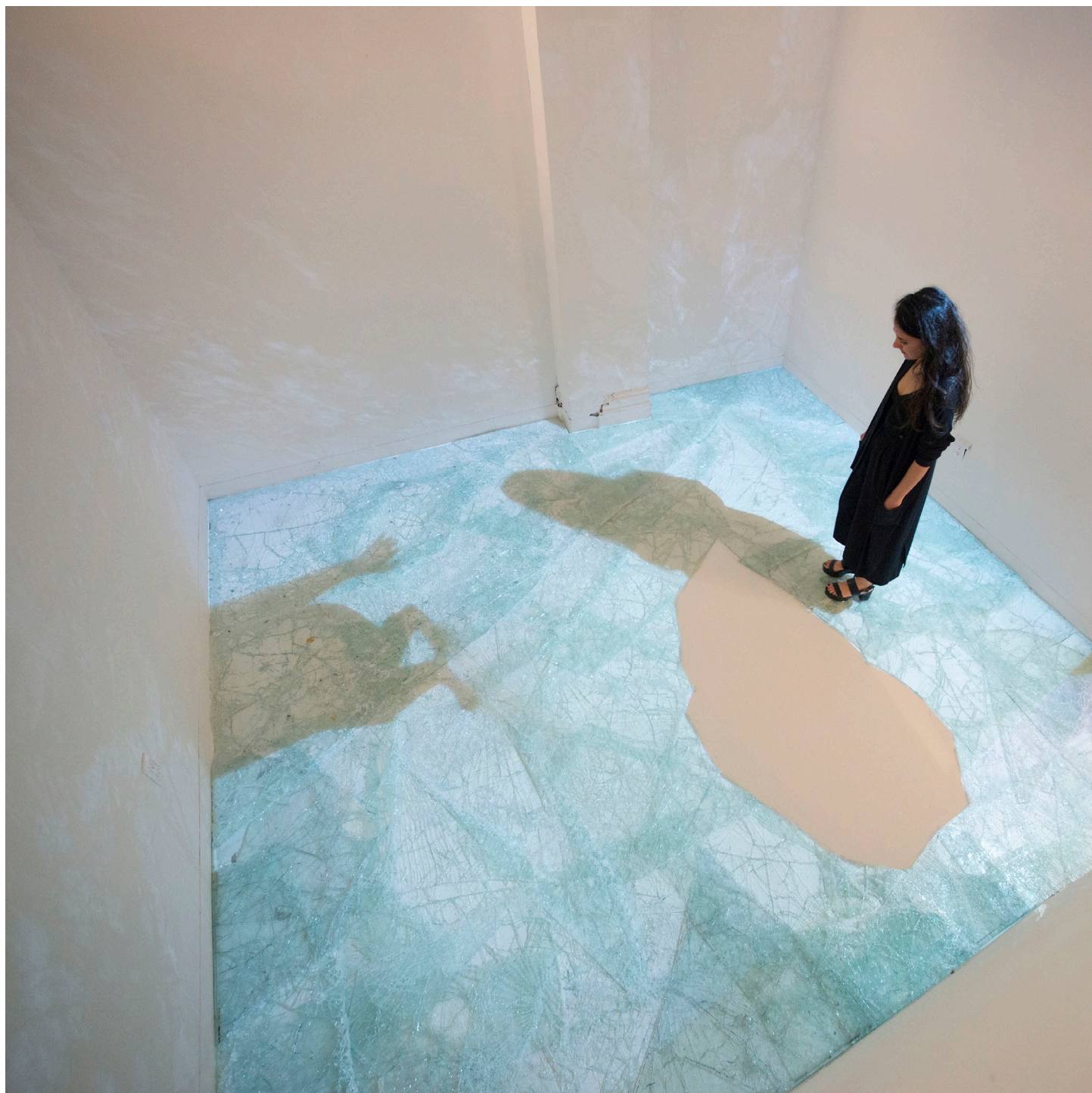


I want to be transparent.



I thought that I wanted to be transparent as the glass, I wanted to expose all my most intimate and rare feelings, scars and insides and show how fragile I am just as the glass when broken. One of my recent works was a floor installation called *Edge of Transparency*. This piece covered the entire space of the room it occupied. It invited the viewer to walk into space and step on the glass. Accepting the offer meant becoming part of the performance and stepping into the relationship between the glass components.

*The people who are willing to take the risk and activate the work are the people
I want to engage with, whom I'm making art for.*



Whoever wanted to walk on the glass had to sign a waiver, which meant they had to take their own responsibility. Only one person could enter the space at a time due to a video projection of a figure walking on the glass; when someone entered the space, they activated it by disrupting both the glass and the video with their presence and the sound of cracking glass, with their shadow now cast over the surface. The viewer would be confronted with the choice of walking over the figure, around it, or even with it. Thus a relationship between the activator and the work starts to happen; a dialogue between the two figures in the space, and a dialogue between the broken cracking glass and the person who activates it. To step on glass and break it makes you aware of your own body. You nurture yourself to prevent getting hurt, the noise and sensation make you gather and be cautious.

The glass on the floor was already broken and fragile. I had given it its present form, arranged it on the floor and made it available for people to decide to walk over it or not: I was subjecting it to yet more pressure. In hindsight, I understood that to offer to walk on my broken glass was to offer to walk over myself.



Conceptually, my idea and motivation to create my installations and spaces worked out, but I realized that there was an enormous gap between what I think of the glass as an idea and what it represented visually. Without one knowing the metaphor about the glass as relationships then, visually, the material just looks like a pile of threatening, sharp, broken and destroyed glass. Saying that I see myself in the glass, wanting to be its qualities and realizing it's a visual distraction, I understood that I am destroying myself, breaking myself and letting my audience be a part of that act, breaking the glass and breaking me with it.

The recognition of the gap between the concept of my work and the visual aspect of it made me feel free from myself. At first, it was a great disappointment and shock because I realized that conceptually it is only happening in my head. It's important to me that my work speaks for itself. I hope that people can feel how I am communicating in my work and accept the space where they will be willing to give their time to the work and fall into it, letting go and just letting it take them away. I wish that my work allows you to give yourself to it, like the act of falling in love or falling asleep, to allow yourself to drift off, fall into the work for a moment –let it affect you– and then it stays with you.

Then, after it sank for a while, I understood that perhaps that gap is necessary for the viewer to put their interpretation into the work, and in that sense, more people could engage with the work.

A significant influence on how I want the viewers to feel and engage with my work was how I felt with Pipilotti Rist's Pixel Forest (2016) at the New Museum. In Pipilotti's show, once I gave the time it required, I felt how her work and herself were communicating with me; by offering beds and other furniture she was offering the viewers to take the time to let her work into them. Through her work, she offered something that I can't explain but I took it, and it moved me and it made me cry. Her videos expressed to me how vulnerable she can be and how the only language she can speak is art; her vulnerability invited me to identify with her. In I am a Victim of this song, a piece where she screams over Chris Isaak's song Wicked Games, I felt her pain, I felt the risk that she was taking, the risk of getting hurt. I could identify with so many moments and it made me feel comfort that there is a shared feeling between us; we were speaking the same secret language.

To me, those moments are the reason to make Art.

I care about these moments, especially in the crazy, disconnected world that we live in today. I seek to find those beautiful occasions that take our breath away or makes us drop a tear. That is the feelings that I need, and that is the feeling I want to create; the feeling or sense of understatement, identification, and communication. Shared feelings which then can evolve to so many other types of connections that I think are missing in our time.

I create through a constant process, one piece emerging from the previous one; within this process, I've learned to trust my instincts and identify pauses, moments that eventually become my work. When these breaks occur, I can take a decision and allow these moments the attention they need to become a piece.

Another great influence was a beautiful text I read by Wolfgang Iser, “The Reading Process” (The Implied Reader, 1977). The essay discusses the experience of reading a text and how our mind is reacting to it, especially to those blank spaces between the elements contained in the text and those brought forth by the reader; how those gaps are there to be filled with our imagination, mind and experience. Those gaps exist –like a blank canvas– for us to put in our unconscious and create our personal story inside the existing one. In this gap, the viewers play a fundamental role; they can put their past experiences, their thoughts and rumination into the work to activate it, and then take what they need from it. In my case, the viewer doesn’t need me to tell them what the work is about, because the work is outside of me now. The spaces between me and my work, and the work and the viewer, allow for my absence to be present within and between every piece of glass: the work speaks of my actions without showing them, gives my time without imposing it, and wants to be listened without talking. Once I deliver it, the piece can work on its own; the viewers can use it in any way they desire. What I offer is the complexity of beauty in danger; the desire of how much you want to be vulnerable to this threat, to sharpness and destruction before it can hurt you. While working, I have never cut myself with the glass, but metaphorically I’ve been hurt by trying to live transparently. I can offer that fine line between the danger and the time that takes to feel comfortable with it, that doesn’t feel so dangerous after a while. It’s easy and comforting to get used to the danger.

Broken glass is my best friend, just like Radiohead and Thom Yorke are.

When I listen to his music, I have so many feelings running through my body.

It's taking place under my skin and sinking in deep.

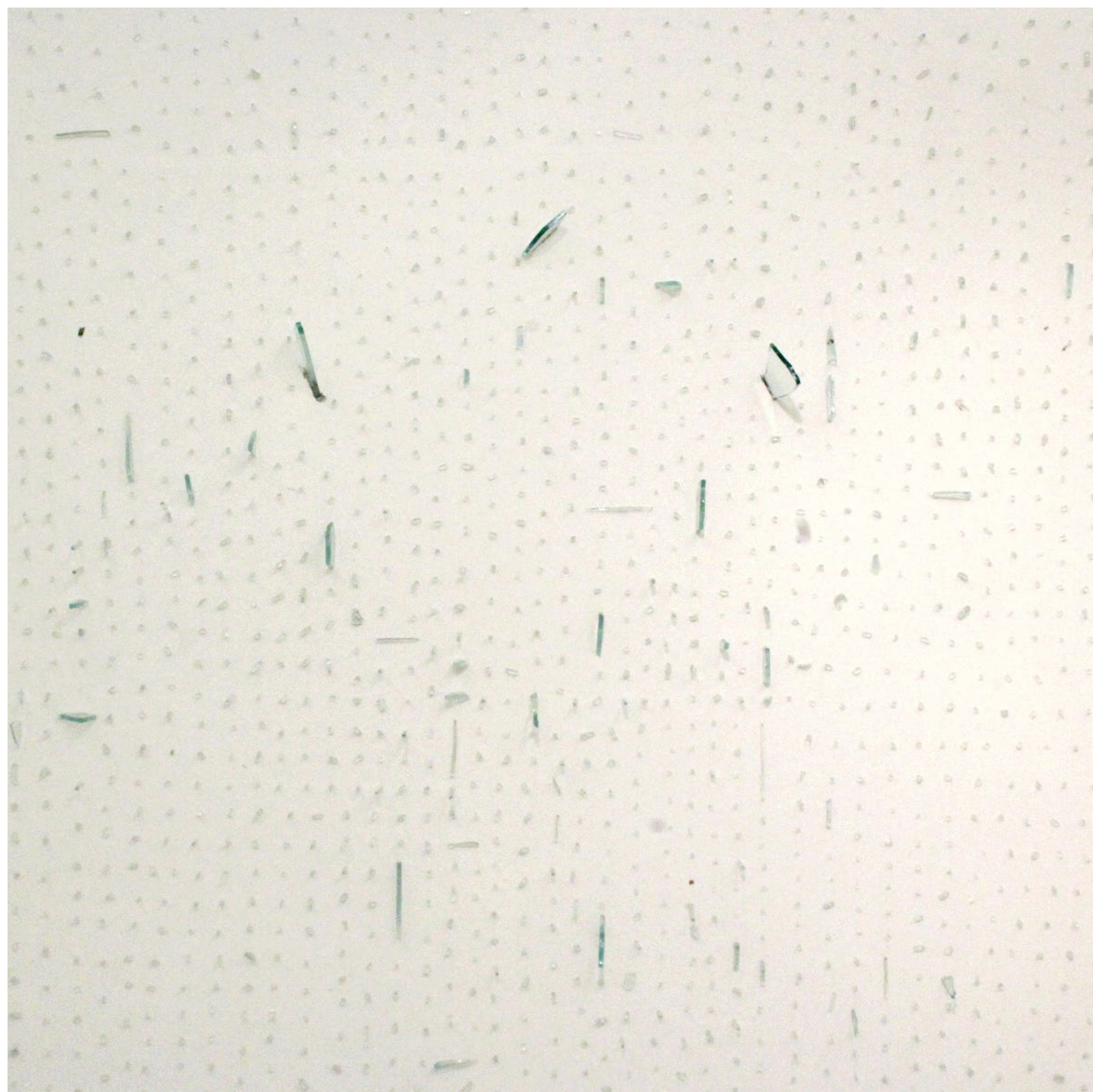
*There is an existence of understanding and comfort between his music,
him and me.*

This is how I feel when I work with glass. I feel comfortable and I feel natural. Although I understand the peril, I can't feel the danger of working with glass –it does not frighten me.

Falling in love through my work because of its process, because it is so vulnerable and honest is why I can't stop doing it, why I want to be transparent; it's opening me to others along my way. I believe there is strength in being able to identify it and not to be scared to admit it, even if it's just for the sake of what it is.

Taking the offer that is there for us as artists: Creation or destruction. It's always those two choices; one can either create (love) or destroy. After I destroyed so much glass, I just wanted to create, put together all the broken pieces into a new surface, one I was creating from the destructions I have created.

The Presence of Absence

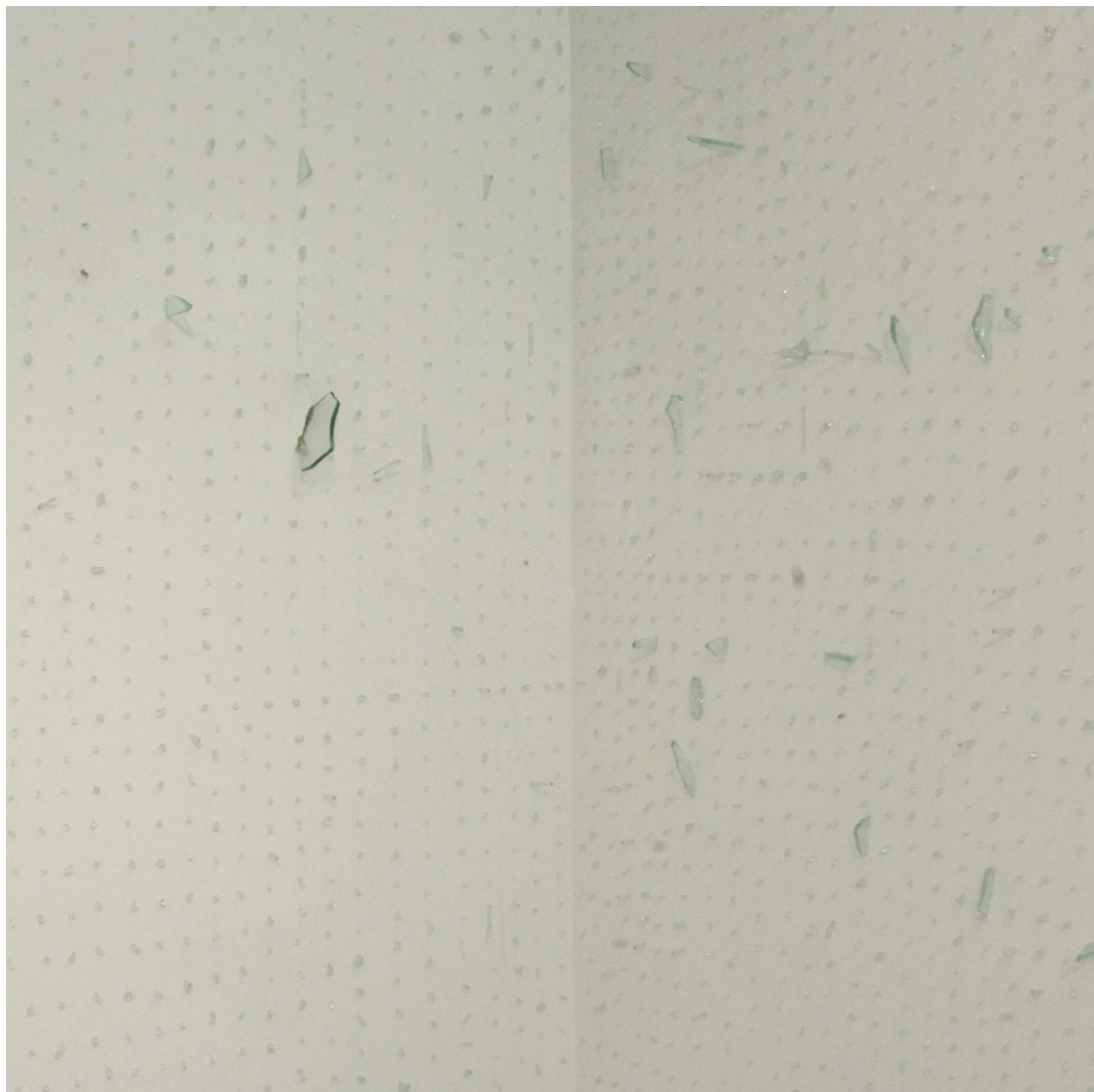


My most recent piece started from my need to stop breaking the glass and wanting to put it back together. I began gluing thousands of pieces of broken glass to the walls of my studio. For almost two months I was doing the same repetitive, meditative, obsessive action of gluing. It took from me a lot of time; facing the wall, being in a very specific state of mind, trying not to go crazy. This lonely action forced me to be a nicer person because I needed people to communicate with; it made me more welcoming to people, and it opened me up to others.

The work became more performative to me than just being objects on the walls.



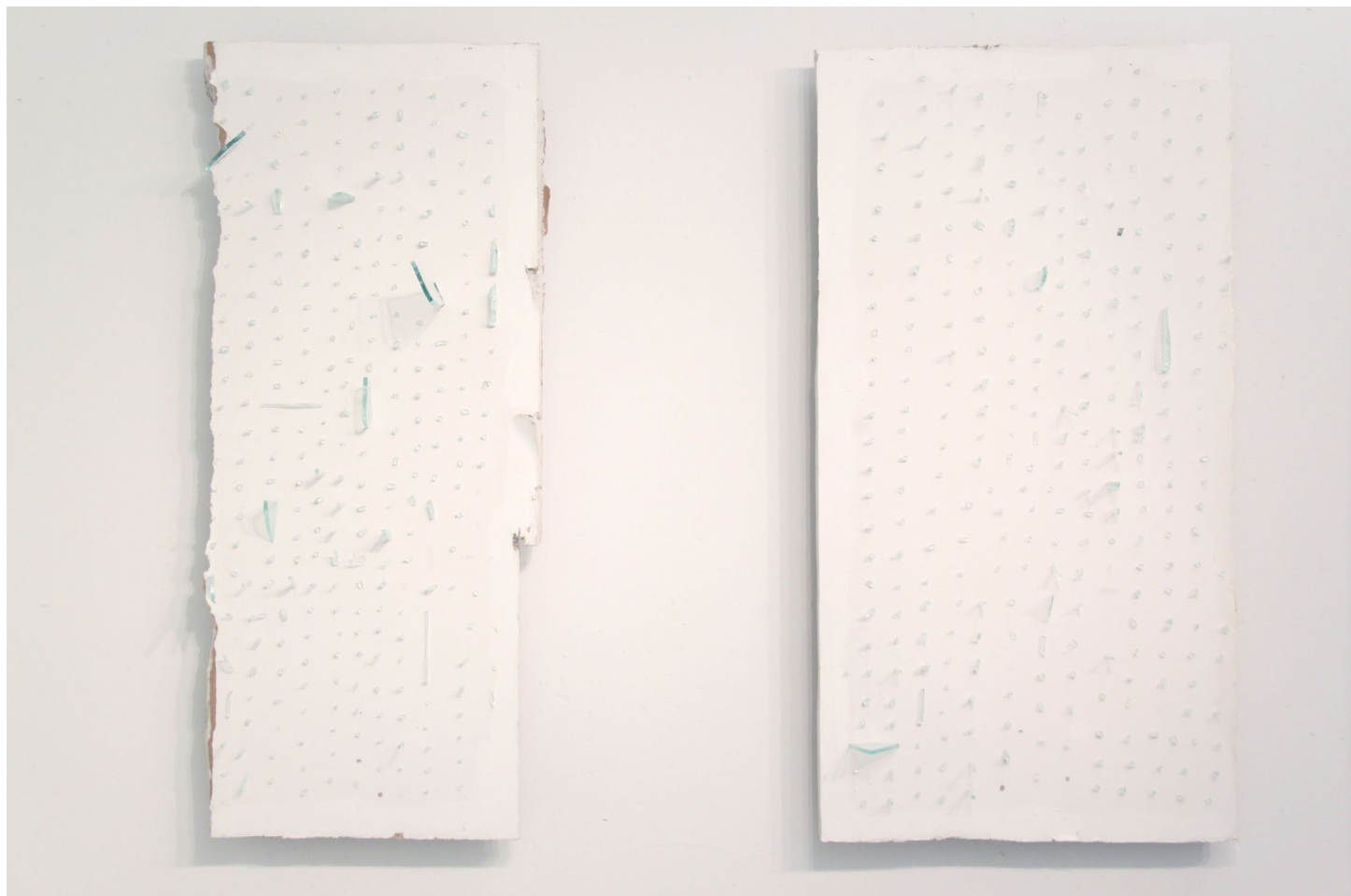
I became the performer, and the person who was present in the space while I was working became the viewer. For a while, after I finished covering the walls, I felt like the work was dead to me because the process was over. I stopped being the performer; I ceased to be so vulnerable. Then I realized I was all over the work. My presence was all over the walls. The absence of the person who was my viewer was as well on the walls. Everything that I felt and was going through in the process of making it was on the walls. The gaps between the broken pieces became amazingly important and full of presence. They are the negative space that means so much, this is the place where everything else exists, just as the gaps between elements in the text “The Reading Process”. It’s the place where one can engage with the work with his thoughts and feelings.





An Organized Mess

I wanted to extend my need to stop breaking the glass, to keep for my self the walls I had created that became so meaningful to me. I decided to intervene in the construction of the walls of my studio and take pieces from the walls in order to keep a fragment of The Presence of Absence. Once I did that, I discovered that there was a supportive system that was there for me and for my work the whole time, without me knowing about it. Discovering this was a beautiful thing to me; by taking the risk of perhaps destroying the walls, I discovered new materials –plywood, drywall, screws and metal studs that emerged into my work. I continued organizing the mess I had done; putting all the broken glass into new forms gave me a lot of comfort: as if organizing myself and my own mess. Those forms started to give me more space, physically and emotionally, to continue to discover the beauty of simplicity, transparency and honesty. I was able to see clearly, all over again, the materiality, complexity and beauty of the broken glass.







The broken glass became more meaningful to me than ever. It absorbed everything I have done to it, all of the breaking it suffered, putting it under more pressure, making it more fragile and vulnerable and yet it never broke apart. It stayed with me all the time. To me, this is the most real, honest and beautiful relationship I seek for.

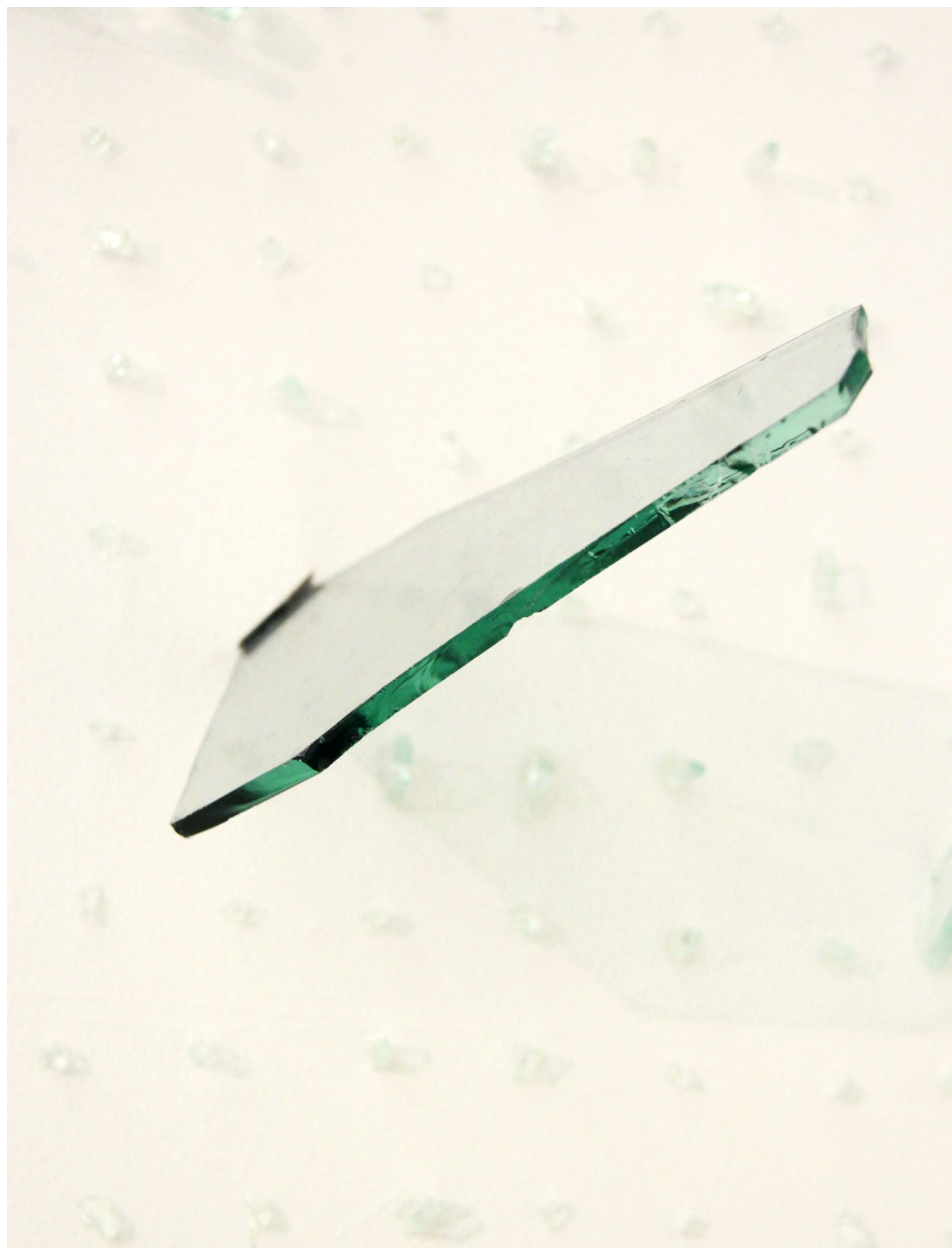




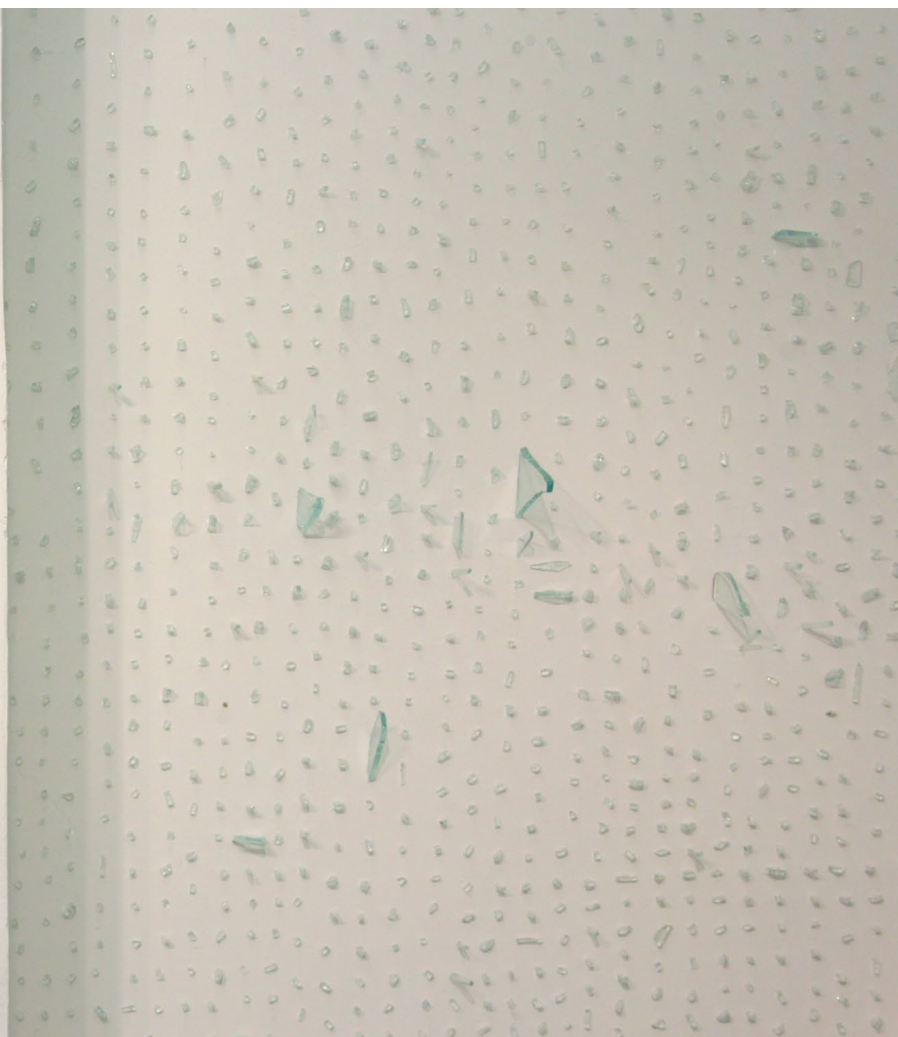
I make Art because this is my way to communicate and discover myself. I make Art because Its the only thing I can trust that will make me feel safe. Making Art will always be there for me; in every hour of the day, in any place I will go. Making Art is my way to stay vulnerable and create a conversation with someone else. Making Art is the way I heal myself from sadness.

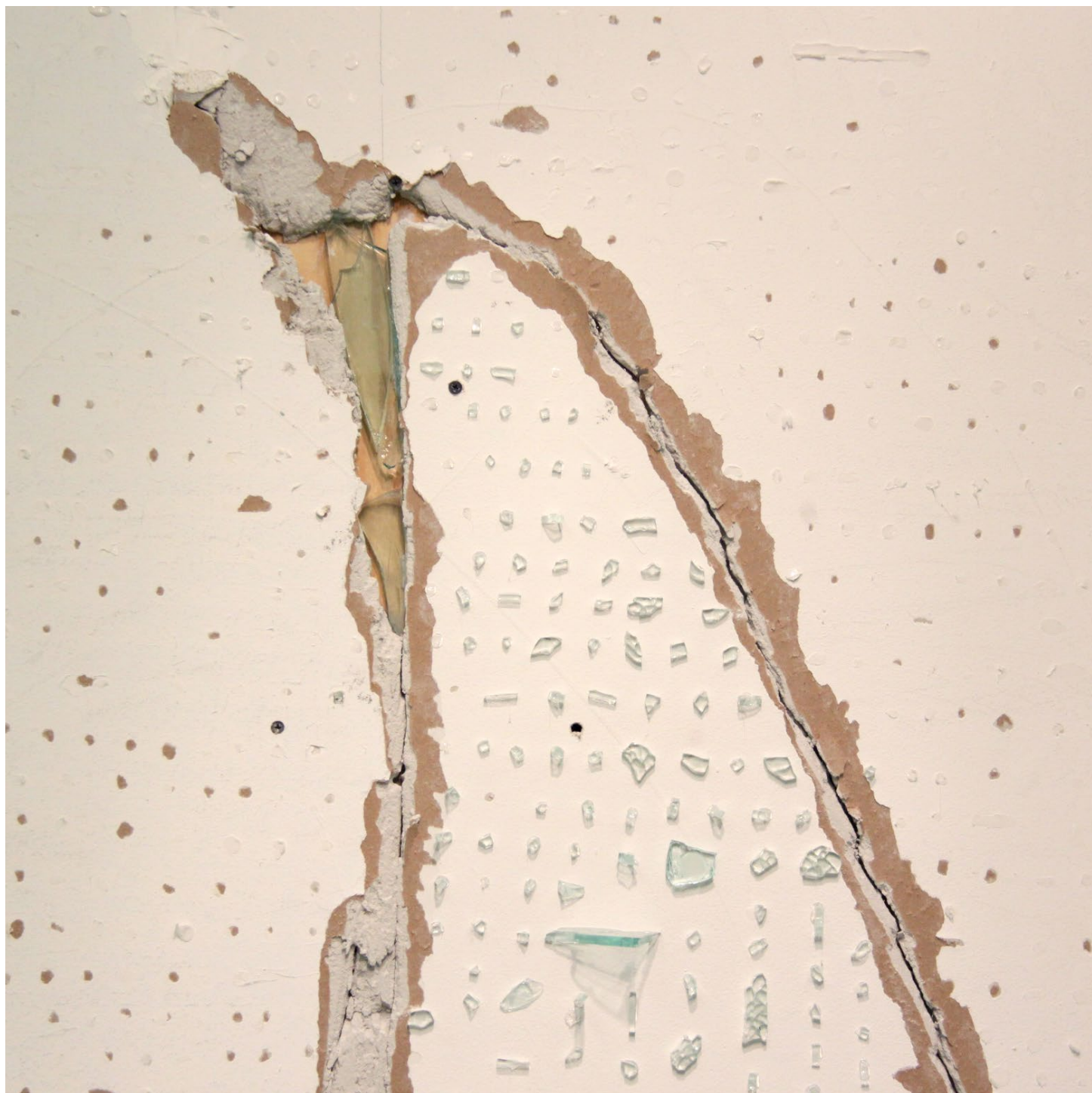
And it all means more than that, when shared.

The observers are necessary to my work with their presence, seeing it, engaging with it, experiencing it. In a way, their presence becomes part of the work, and communication starts to happen. The viewer is activating my work. I do my work for myself and for the viewer, no matter who are they. I want them to, like me, try to be transparent.

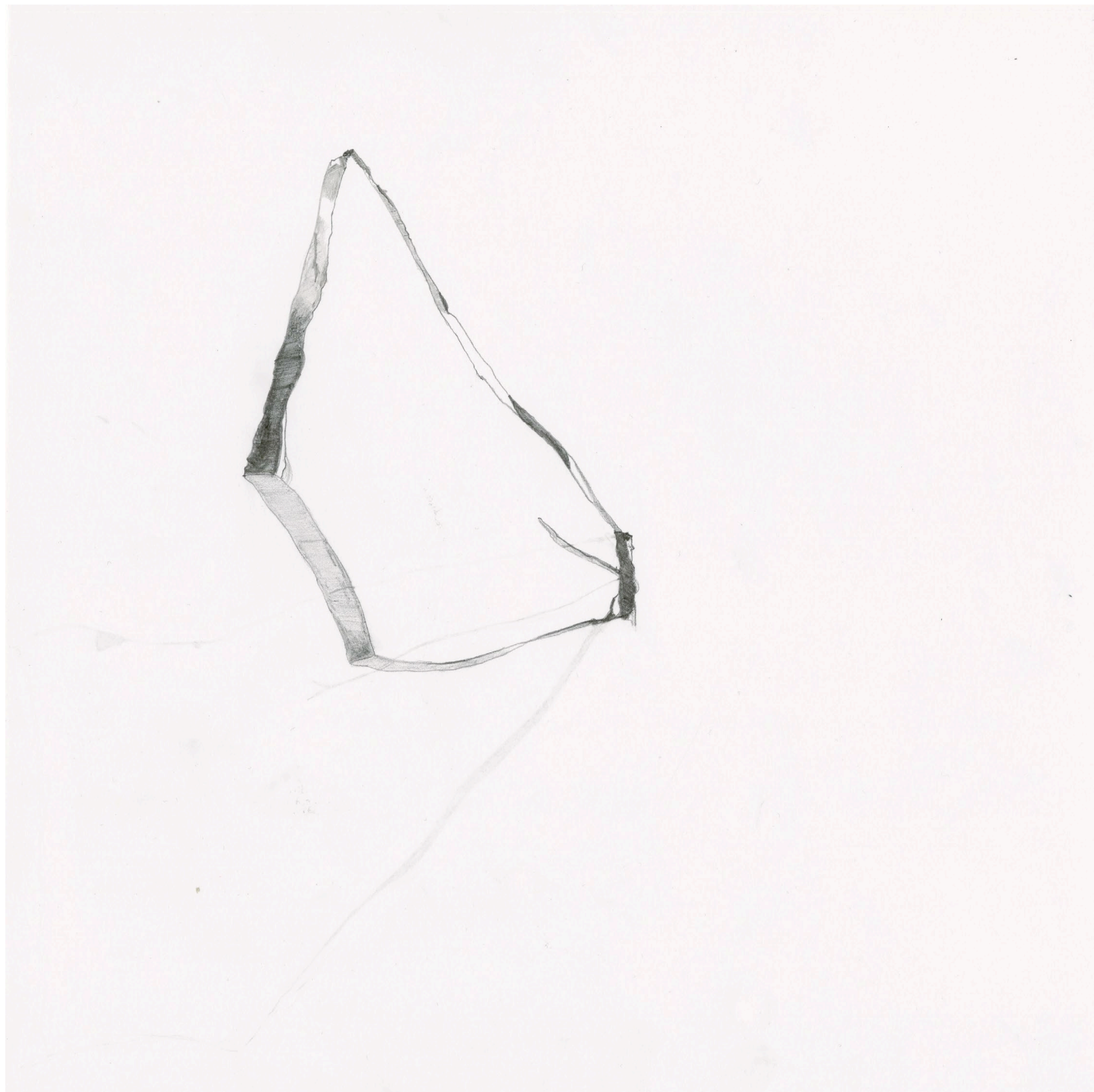


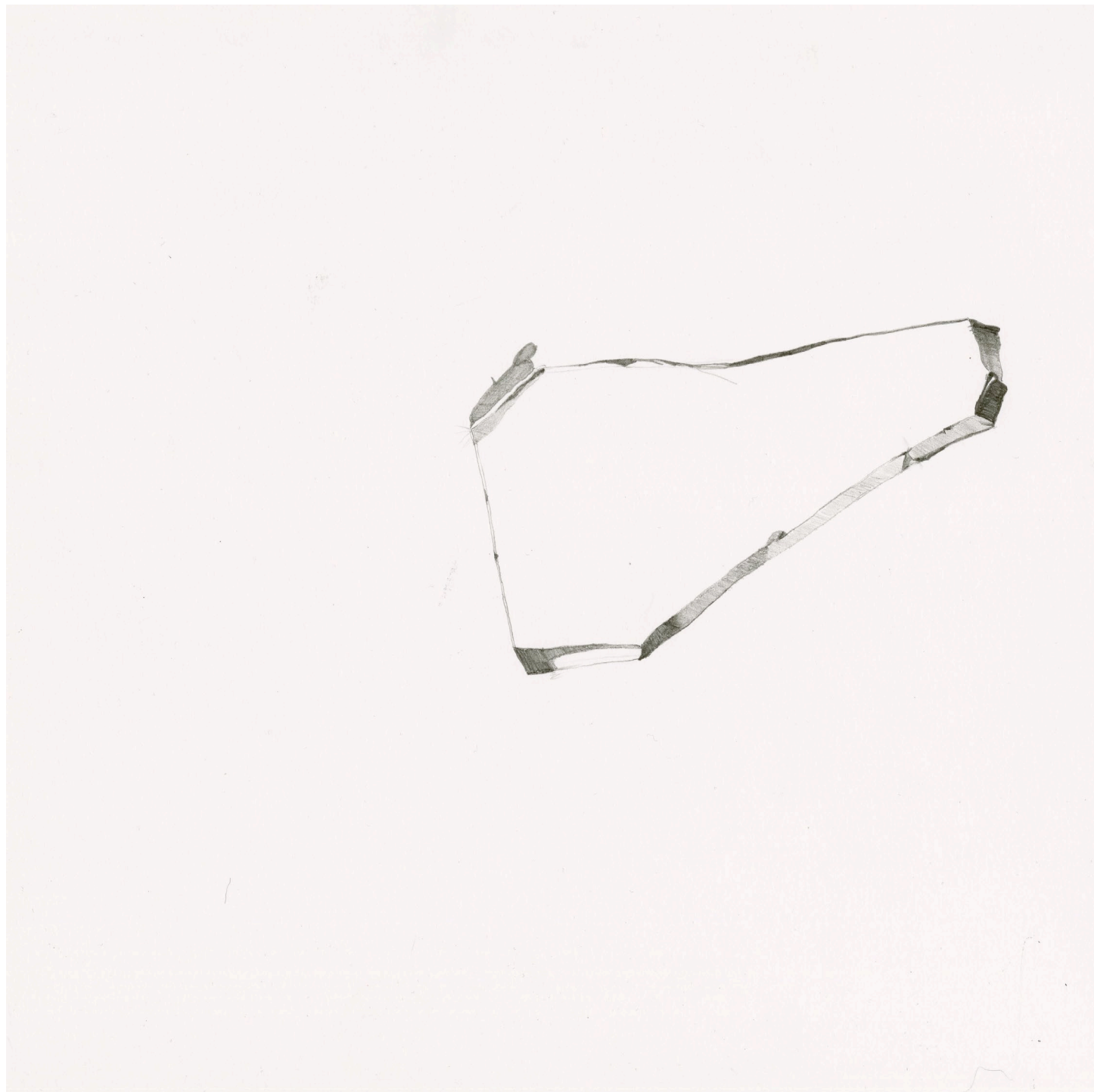


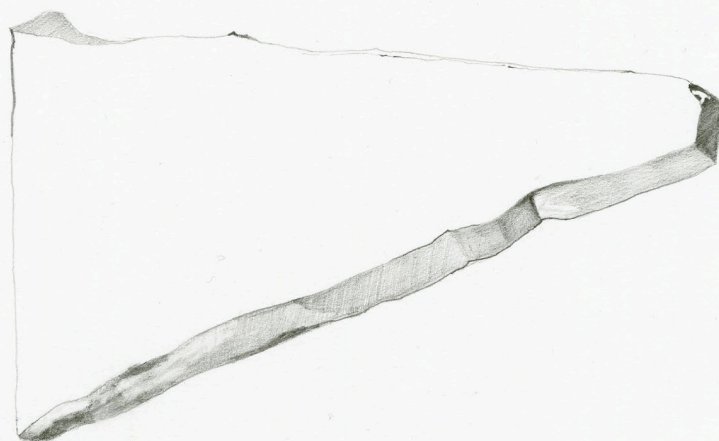


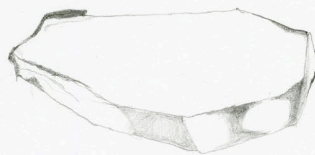
















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