

interference

ainslie murray | mimi tong

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Interference

Ainslie Murray | Mimi Tong

Interference brings together an artist, Mimi Tong, and an architect, Ainslie Murray, who each explore notions of spatial interference in their practices.

The project questions alternative approaches to space by considering multiple definitions of 'interference'. The primary definition, embodying a sense of intrusion and a crossing of boundaries, frames the two practices in a broad sense and explores notions of interdisciplinarity. The second definition, most commonly employed in scientific inquiry, calls up an image of opposing waves moving towards each other and the inevitable and constructive interaction between them.

As an idea, 'interference' guides not only the individual processes of the artists and their explorations of architectural space, but also frames an interdisciplinary dialogue of mutual influence, disturbance, extension and displacement.

*From Further Away Than I Could
Ever Say ...*

Linda Marie Walker

Ainslie Murray's two large sculptural structures, wooden framed, upon which stitched canvasses are mounted, are viewed from either side. No under-side, or behind-the-scenes side, or the inside-of-the-outside side, or the reverse side, but the other side to the side that faces what seems to be the front, or the first side, depending on how you approach – and the how of the approach (the 'how' being way back (in time) before the approach now being made) is an air (like airs-and-graces), a bodily attitude. The before-side cannot be first without the behind-side (second(ary)) being simultaneously present. They are of the same labour, they constitute each other; they are the two surfaces of the middle-ground, the ground lifted upright, like peeled-off skin, upon which a situation or an intense inscription is offered toward the viewer's own (intersected) life. Mimi Tong's gathering of small everyday photographs, re-configured as three-dimensional 'almost-venues', arenas, interiors (like pockets in the vast outside) where (certainly) something is taking/has taken/will take place ("For the gravest of questions in [the world's affairs] is still: what takes place in the approach to the other?"¹), are viewed downward and inward. These photographs

find themselves performing an unimaginable task; they have become island-worlds; worlds produced by cutting and folding, islands of time-out-of-time, time made from time-past, but now time-waiting. Ready-time, found-time, time stilled and (yet) falling (like leaves) only here – and ‘only here’ is a materially cogent quality, sensed by a sixth sense, in concert with the one who (alone) comes (to be affected), as these worlds are ‘unresolved’, incomplete, unending.

It could be said ... that these two works each have their own rhyme and rhythm, emanations even. It could be said ... are four small words, like four small stitches (on a canvas), or four small shapes (on an island), extraneous, yet there to suggest what is left out, and what is left in that is said too quickly – not unlike the ‘and so forth’ that Jacques Derrida uses like a delicate (or not) instrument in his writings to tell you he cannot ‘take the time’ he should take to make appear all the nuances, known and unknown, that lurk everywhere in and around what he is managing to take the time (his and ours) to say/write (“... one only writes for touch/one only writes to touch on it

(in view of it, on it, in its favour, and so forth) ...”²); this is the alarming, and comforting, position of being always-momentary, always-partial: what does/can one do, where does one go (to in the writing), when there is too much to say, to do, to think, about/for, in relation to, in the presence of a person, a thing, an incident, a circumstance, a limitation, a disaster, an invitation, for instance – and in the instance of ‘the works’, in the instance of their constellated form, in the instance of their containment (in language, in particular (designed) surrounds, in the company of, in the gaze of, a conditioned audience).

En/folding and bending, bringing edges together, creates capacities – not so as to instantly realise, report, and reduce (bring into known paradigms) their quiet alleviation (their capacity to make loss or pain bearable) – that resonate and propose, in their precision and organization, almost to the point of defiance (to the antipathy of revolution), the more unexpected opening-out; an opening (out) that does not literally give more breathing-room, but suggests it’s there for the taking. This is an entirely different responsibility in terms of ‘sense’. The works cannot give their ‘sense’;

sense must be 'taken' in an act equal to the 'work' of the work 'shown'. This could be said ... to be the matter of 'air', of atmosphere, of the lines, the threads, the views, the creases, and all their various relationships – blurring, criss-crossing, dissolving; here, it is (it manifests) faintly, barely, lightly, in/as the very exacting endeavour of making artworks that do not pre-determine the effect, or stabilize the 'program' (that is, do not make so as to be accessible, or so as to make the user's passage in the building smooth (A to B, oblivious), without disturbance/interference.

The body is a presence presenting itself within the constructed enclosure of 'gallery'/exhibition, and in the presence/company of the displays-of-thought. And all around is air; air is the-matter of critical 'affect', everything in and of air – all the materialities touching through the air (and thought), through immaterial materiality, having been conjured out of the air, out of breath (a breathlessness). The breath and thought are weighed and forced by gravity, by the graveness that feels, from moment to moment, different densities – light heavy thin thick still fierce clear cloudy. With the air (in union with the-air, with

breath), the processes of stitching, of slicing, by hand, bit by bit, brings about the actuality of 'work' – nothing extraordinary, no spectacle demanding participation, just, and rather, the strange obsession of performing continual, yet gestural, expressions/movements (one by one, one after the other, like single notes of music, like speaking, word by word, like walking, step by step); and, in the doing an invisible shelter appears (it could be said), radiating out of the work to other times and places (to Japan, and the artist Machiko Agano, and the designer Gabriel Scarvelli; to China, and the impossibility of being at-home; to architectures that 'undo' the bones, that refract blood, that hear hearts beating). These shelter(s), that are emergent, imaginary, can only form themselves in and of us because the works have become-present (have risked being evident); they are architectures that do not lay-claim to the earth, as territory, as economic value, as product, but are with the earth as the vibration of air, of connections and disconnections and intent and chance and interweaving tones and ambiances, and interiorities of such immense histories that the point of entry (the canvasses of stitching, the arrangement of scenarios) is

concentrated, saturated, intense (convoluted, contained, condensed), resembling dedication/devotion (hope, mercy, loyalty) – each work, and each as it touches the other (the spatiality of brushings, skimmings, grazings (the nervous shudders and pleasurable tinglings), the tiny sites of angles/bends, the composing upon planes, with limits – their (given) arbitrariness, complex-systems amidst complex-systems, and functioning (spinning, bursting, holding, spreading) through our own complex-demeanour; ‘function’ performs: it is non-pragmatic, non-profitable, non-innovative, non-appropriative; it is a dynamic-contemplation. It could be said . . . too, that each stitch (repetitious effort with thread and needle and cloth, pushing and pulling and loosening and tightening) and cut/fold (with knife and ruler, slicing and drawing (away), angling and hinging) in its own right, is a contemplated move, a move with consequences.

These works could go on endlessly; boundaries have been set for them, they are bound – artificial, manageable; and the boundaries – explicit as planes which take the work (into/to themselves), allow the work to dispose/disperse

itself, to become a type of comportment – are inflections; and, as inflections, seem rational, sane, necessary, but their projection as screens, as indicators of cosmos is, in their probative given-ness, irrational, insane, unnecessary, in fact the expression of chaos, of how infinity is reeled in, constellated, governed, so that some semblance of sensation can be felt upon the body, wrapped firm (and vulnerable) in its skin: “... the built frame, produced through a regulation and partitioning of orientations in the site [gallery, art], divides and selects that which of the territory, now configured as landscape, a view [the work], can directly mark, and illuminate, the inside, the divisions and selections of a community [the audience]. And within the built frame, as a frame within a frame within a frame, is the co-existence of our bodies and their bodily supports, furnishings [artworks] that make our bodies an abundance of sensation and actions.”³

All of a sudden in the gallery (or other nameable-space), the elements of body, ‘work’, space, in the air/atmosphere, cohere momentarily, and simultaneously (and momentarily) break apart, separate (and desert),

and are madly at odds with themselves, as into the gaps between cohesion/detachment, dilation/contraction – a slowing (steadying) tempo, unlikely memories light up (even ones one hasn't had (“... weeping for what I hadn't had, what I hadn't lost, like a woman suffers from having lost the child she never had ...”⁴) – the world out-there is felt, one's self is entity (solitaire), and (a speck) amongst unpredictable entities, knowings and events. “Art thus captures an element, a fragment, of chaos in the frame and creates or extracts from it, not an image or representation but a sensation, or rather, a compound of a multiplicity of sensations, not the repetition of sensations already experienced or available beyond or outside the work of art, but those very sensations generated and proliferated only by art.”⁵

The photographic and stitched scenarios or ‘durations’ that come from elsewhere, that are already outside, beyond, the limits of the frame (“I began above, or next to the frame, and the line traverses the frame.”⁶), are diffuse to begin with – the images are not especially picturesque or informative or exotic, they do not purport to explain

‘chineseness’ (for instance), the lines of stitching do not suggest the mapping of an originating premise. Instead, arrestment, and an arrestment after ‘labour’; here time drifts, as if it could, as if one could say that it does, and in language, writing, one can say that, so that something gets through (to the bodies in the/any vicinity) – laughter, amazement, wonder, (more) speaking. The ‘durations’ draw in air, pause breath, halt the incessant movement of thought, its wavering, its touch upon itself as tension and traction, and its thought of a thought as a caress of ‘air’, as softness, suspension. Without air, death. We breathe in the same air as the ‘works’, and can do so more deeply (perhaps), more definitely, as “[n]o other element carries with it – or lets itself be passed through by – light and shadow, voice or silence. ... No other element is in this way space prior to all localization, and a substratum both immobile and mobile, permanent and flowing, where multiple temporal divisions remain forever possible.”⁷

Air changes all surfaces, backs and fronts, tops and bottoms (colours, textures, strengths), and gives sound to thought; and writing forms from air/thought racing

too quickly to become visible as marks on paper; and so writing forms always too-late, having missed (always) its chance. It could be said ... that in the end only notes are written, and in the end art/work arises timely for the 'event' (otherwise it would be just-what-goes-on-being-done; in other words, our daily practice). Like a kind of quiet darkness – by acts of volition, by following the 'everything' one is part of, exhaustively, the possibility of arriving, geographically, at the arrangement of matter through the rhythms of free air (the 'real' architecture of our living-labour; it takes not-forgetting), crucial, essential, and before the gaze, and complete/incomplete – art is energy, the dissonance, of air, of our involuntary internal dwelling place, from where, being unhindered, looking/working takes-place from both/all sides.

The quiescence (the strangeness that invents the-place) of these works differs one from the other. Each has its own distinct affective concern/ambience, and in the difference(s) space is 'engendered', excessive and intimate, where one can, if one chooses, recognize the confluences, the awkward couplings, of the world-as-always otherwise

(than what one thinks); these finely realised decisions/substances envelop the intricate intuitions and the shady enfoldments (embraces) of reachings (outward) to make more of what was there/here already. "It is for this reason that art is not frivolous, an indulgence of luxury, an embellishment of what is most central: it is the most vital and direct form of impact on and through the body, the generator of vibratory waves, rhythms, that traverse the body and make of the body a link with forces it cannot otherwise perceive and act upon."⁸

Notes

- 1 Peggy Kamuf, *Book Of Addresses*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2005: 131.
- 2 Jacques Derrida, *Le Touch, Touch/To Touch Him, Paragraph, A Journal Of Modern Critical Theory*, Edinburgh University Press, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1993: 135.
- 3 Elizabeth Grosz, *IDEA Journal (Interior Design/Interior Architecture Educators Association)*, Queensland University Press, Brisbane, 2005: 21.
- 4 Hélène Cixous, *Firstdays Of The Year*, trans. Catherine A.R. MacGillivray, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1998: 7.
- 5 Grosz: 22.
- 6 Gilles Deleuze, *Nomadic Thought, Desert Islands And Other Texts, 1953-1974*, trans. Michael Taormina, Semiotext(e), New York, 2004: 255 ("But whatever is in the frame, at what point does it become beautiful? At the moment one knows and feels that the movement, that the line which is framed comes from elsewhere, that it does not begin within the limits of the frame. It began above, or next to the frame, and the line traverses the frame.")
- 7 Luce Irigaray, *The Forgetting Of Air In Martin Heidegger*, trans. Mary Beth Mader, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1999: 6.
- 8 Grosz: 24.

Unfurling

Ainslie Murray

Unfurling is a series of large-scale textile works exploring the impact of the moving body on air in architectural space.

A single hand is isolated in the act of unfurling, its upward and downward arcs traced in two dimensions. Air is considered as liquid, and the wake of the hand is traced in a series of radiating lines marking both time and space. Architecture offers itself as a containing edge, continuously reflecting the displaced air within itself. Over time the bounded space develops an invisible turbulence; a complexity that belies its apparent stillness.

This work reflects upon different modes of space-making and is developed from an encounter with textile artist Machiko Agano in Kyoto in 2006. Air is considered as the primary substance of architectural space, and its invisible disturbances and trajectories are made visible as alternative forms of structure. This work is an architecture of body, air and motion; it is an architecture drawn from the barely perceived consequences of our movements within air.

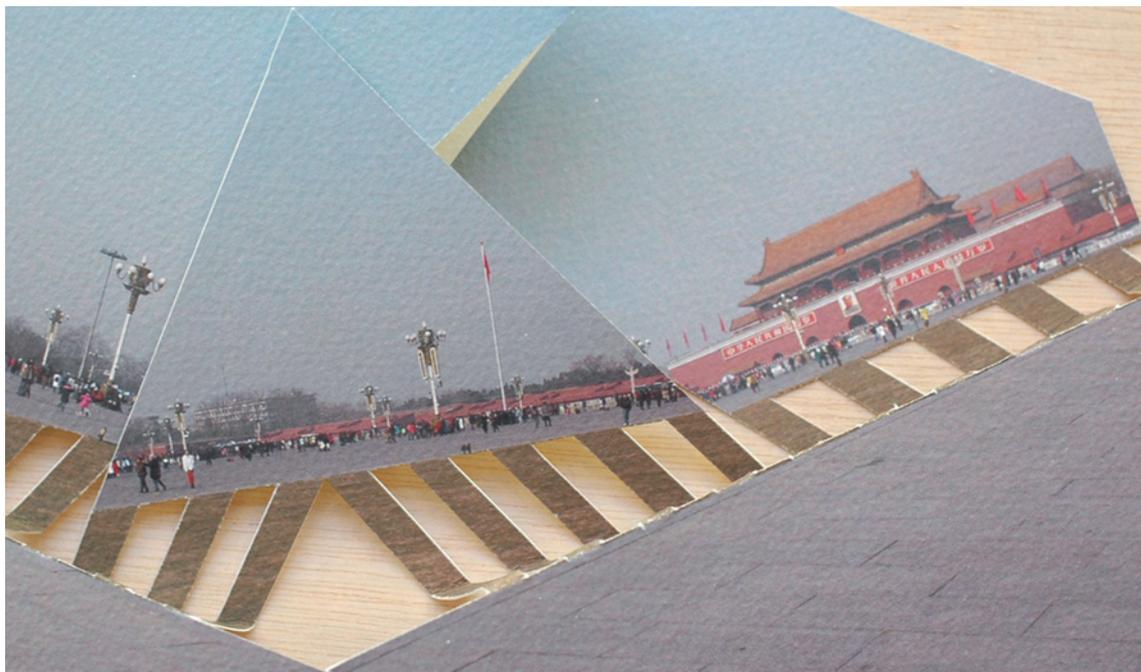
Folding Cities : China II

Mimi Tong

Folding Cities: China II is a series of paper sculptures exploring representational architectural space and geometric abstraction.

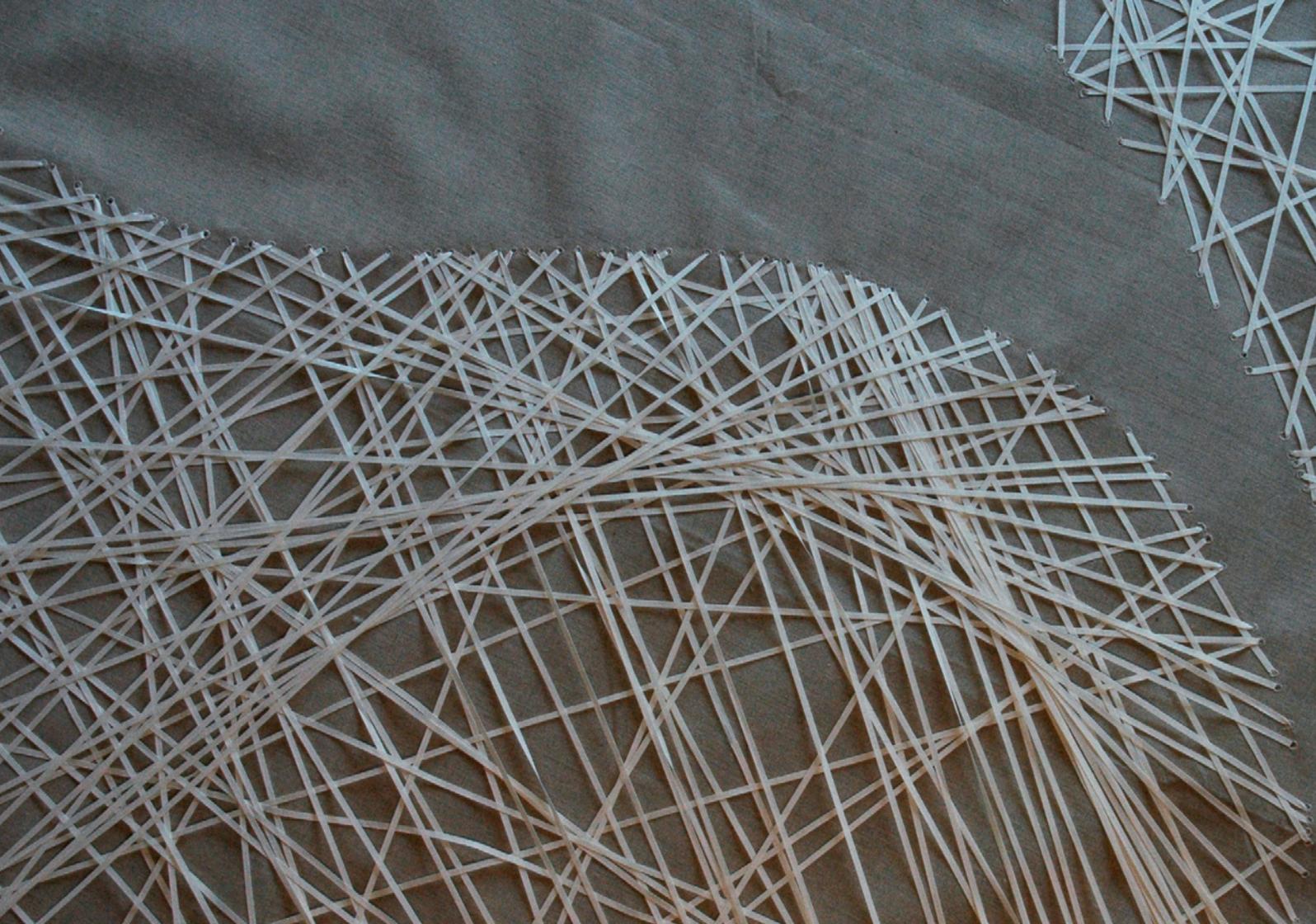
Photographic images of China's urban and rural landscape are physically manipulated by hand, cut and folded to redefine the spatial composition of the image. The sculptural intervention metaphorically shifts the constructed elements of built environment imagery by playing with the inherent geometry. The intervention conforms to the line work in the image as well as independently maps an abstract path to free the image from literal representation and reading.

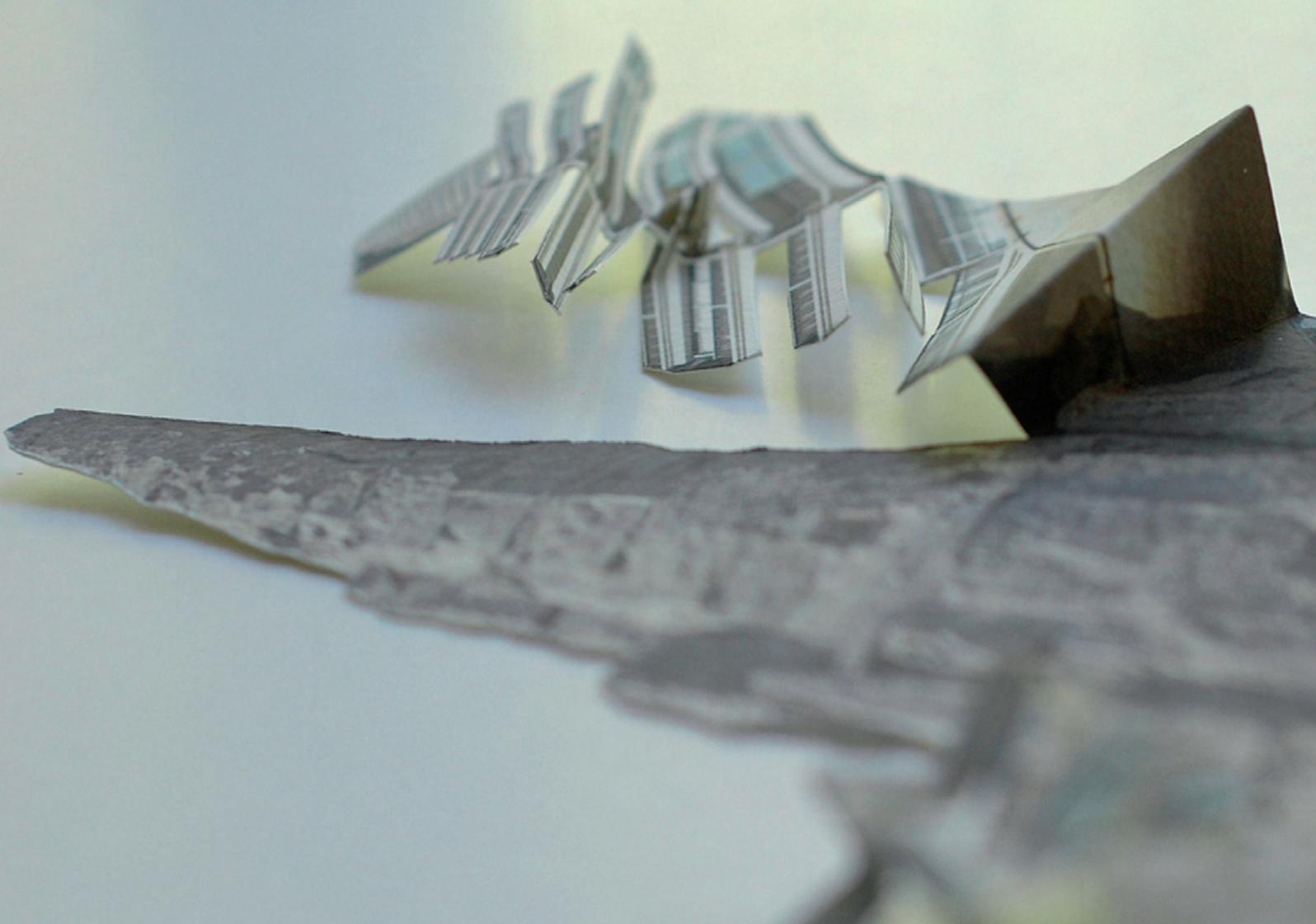
Folding Cities: China II traces my experience of the Chinese cultural landscape as a recent tourist and artist in residence. Navigating my way through Guangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing using diverse forms of public and private transport. The pedestrian speed covering distance and (dis)orientation particularly on foot and bicycle impacted upon my processing and formulating impressions of these cities, spaces and events.

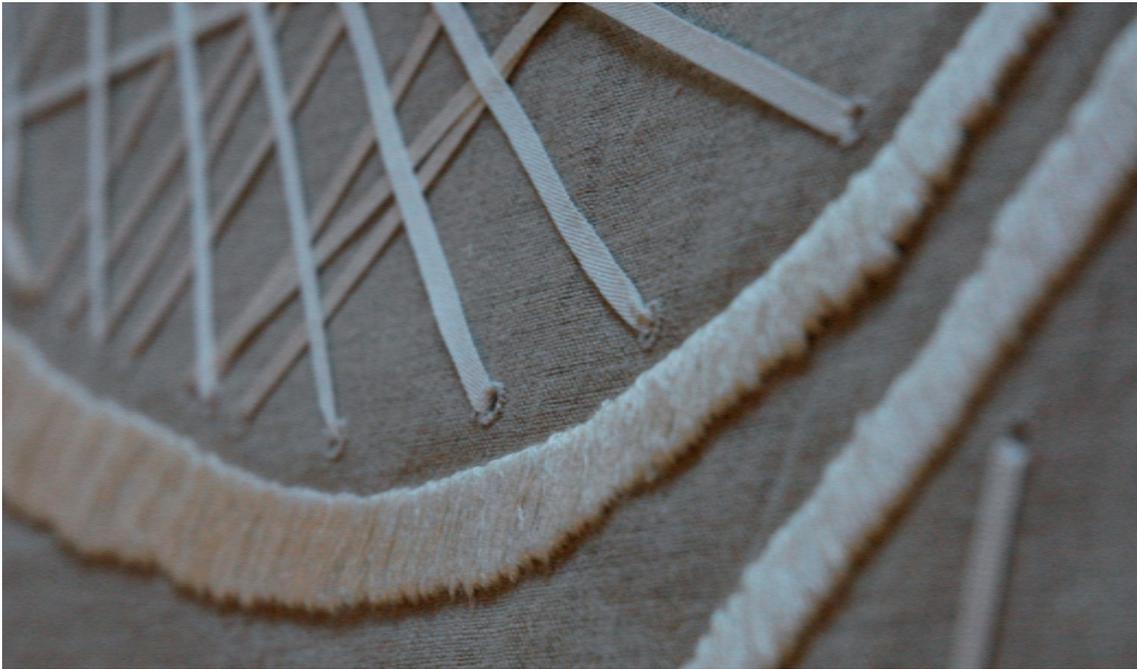


Mimi Tong, *Folding Cities: China II*, 2007
giclée print on watercolour paper
36 paper sculptures, approx. 25 x 18 x 4 cm each
photograph : Mimi Tong

opposite Ainslie Murray, *Unfurling (4th reflection)* (process detail), 2007
belgian linen, cotton thread, viscose ribbon
approx. 250 x 200 cm
photograph : Ainslie Murray







opposite Mimi Tong, *Folding Cities: China II*, 2007
giclée print on watercolour paper
36 paper sculptures, approx. 25 x 18 x 4 cm each
photograph : Mimi Tong

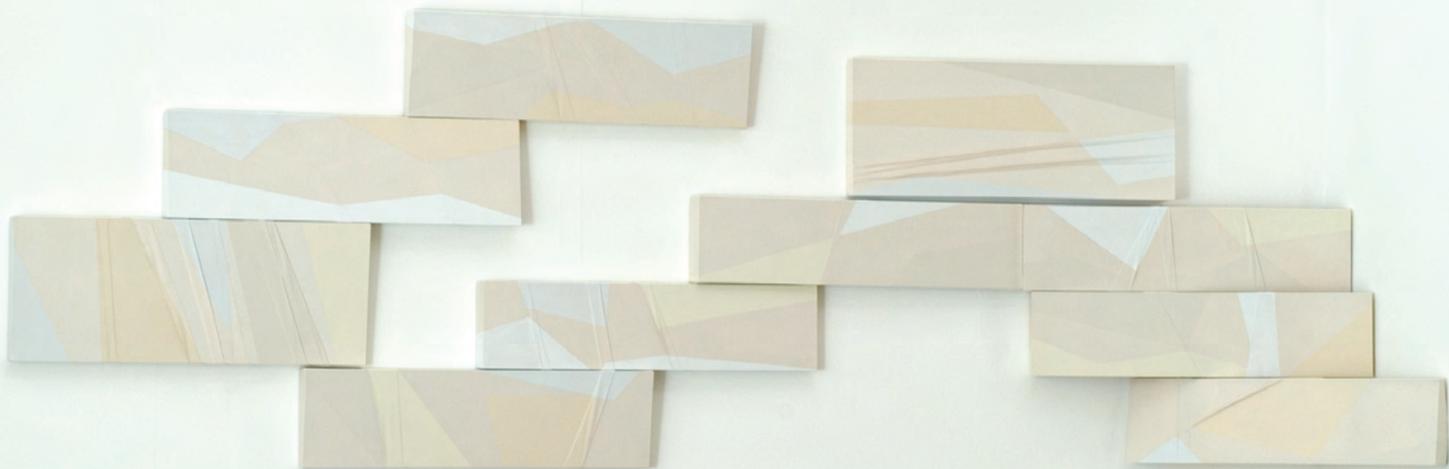
Ainslie Murray, *Unfurling (1st reflection)* (detail), 2007
belgian linen, linen thread, cotton thread, viscose ribbon
approx. 250 x 200 cm
photograph : Ainslie Murray

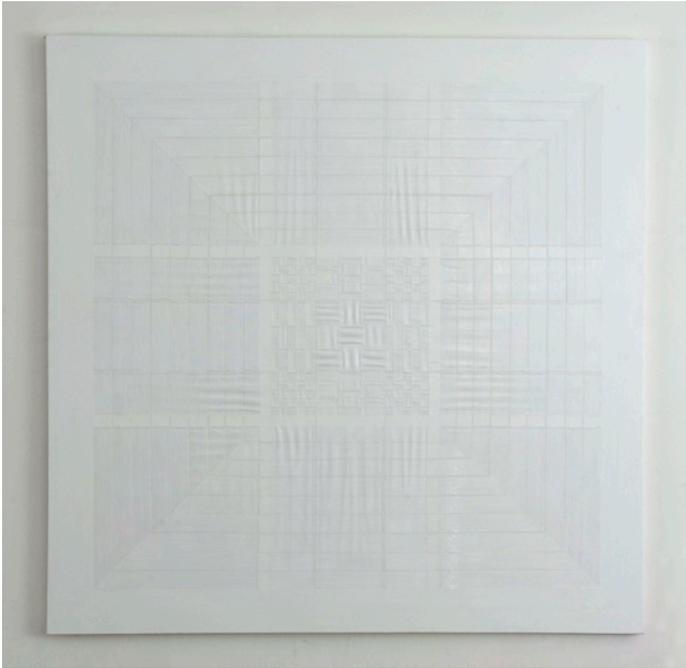


Mimi Tong, *Folding Interface*, 2006
wood, canvas, gesso, acrylic paint
20 canvases, 120 x 60 x 9 cm each
photograph : Mimi Tong

opposite Ainslie Murray, *Untitled* (process detail), 2005
linen, cotton thread, wooden chopsticks
approx. 120 x 100 cm
photograph : Ainslie Murray







opposite Mimi Tong, *Geometric Folding Experiment II*, 2004
wood, canvas, gesso, cotton thread, acrylic paint
10 canvases, approx. 100 x 40 x 9 cm each
photograph : Ian Hobbs



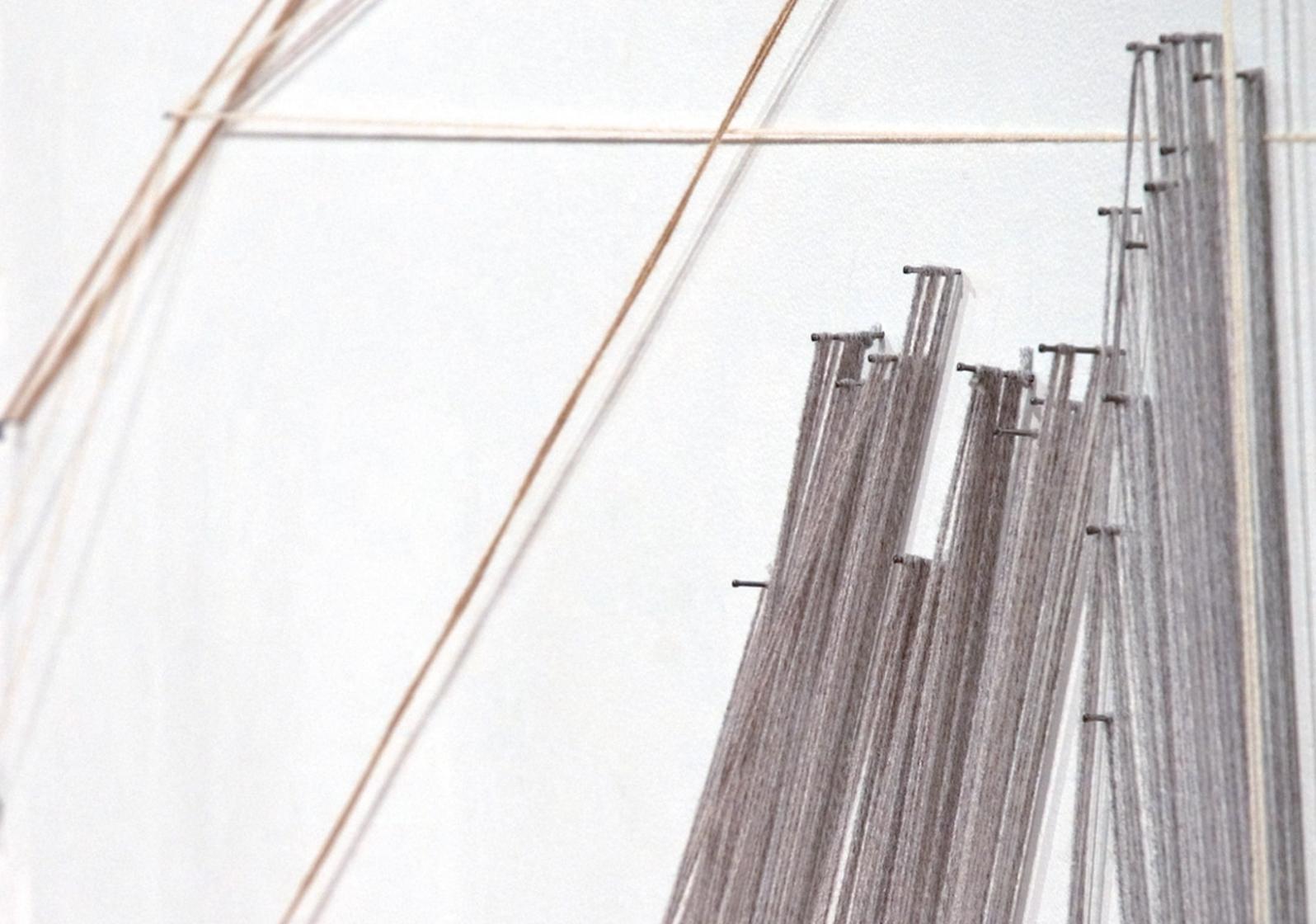
Ainslie Murray, *Char Dham Walk (Garhwal)*, 2007
acrylic paint, monofilament stitching, canvas
170 x 170 cm
photographs : Ian Hobbs



Mimi Tong, *Sojourn Space Book* (detail), 2007
photographic collage, ink drawing, paper
100 x 30 cm overall
photograph : Mimi Tong

opposite Ainslie Murray, *Passage*, 2005
heat-set shaped cotton, cotton thread
approx. 300 x 200 cm
photograph : Ainslie Murray



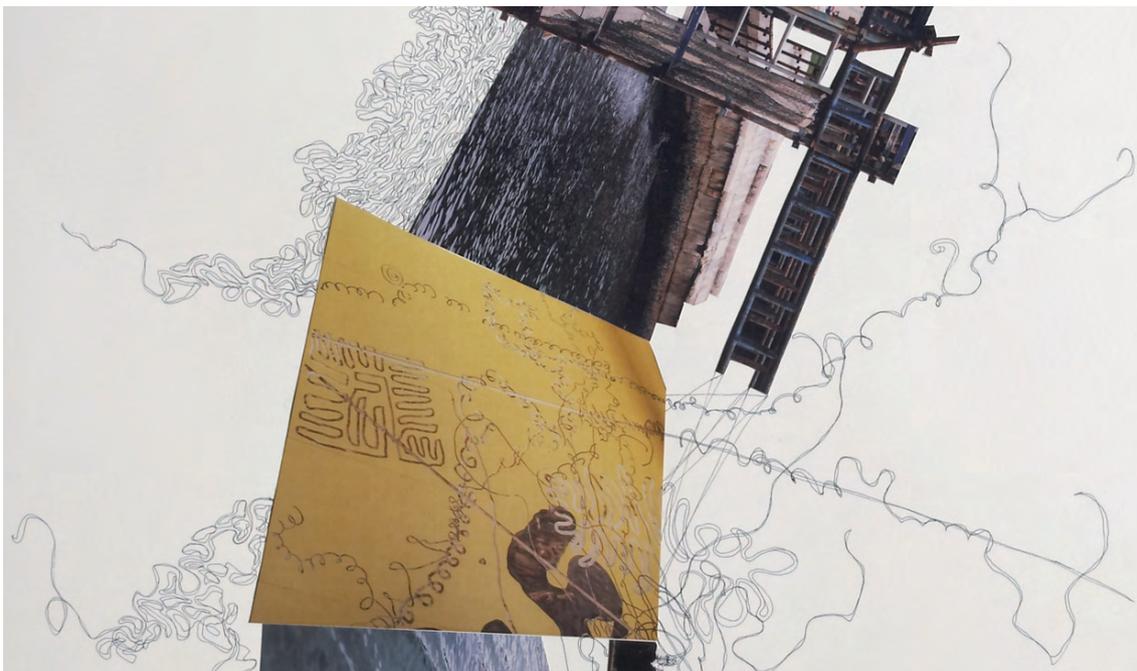




opposite Mimi Tong, *The Mountaineering Project* (detail), 2006
wool yarn, nails
1200 x 350 cm
photograph : Ian Hobbs

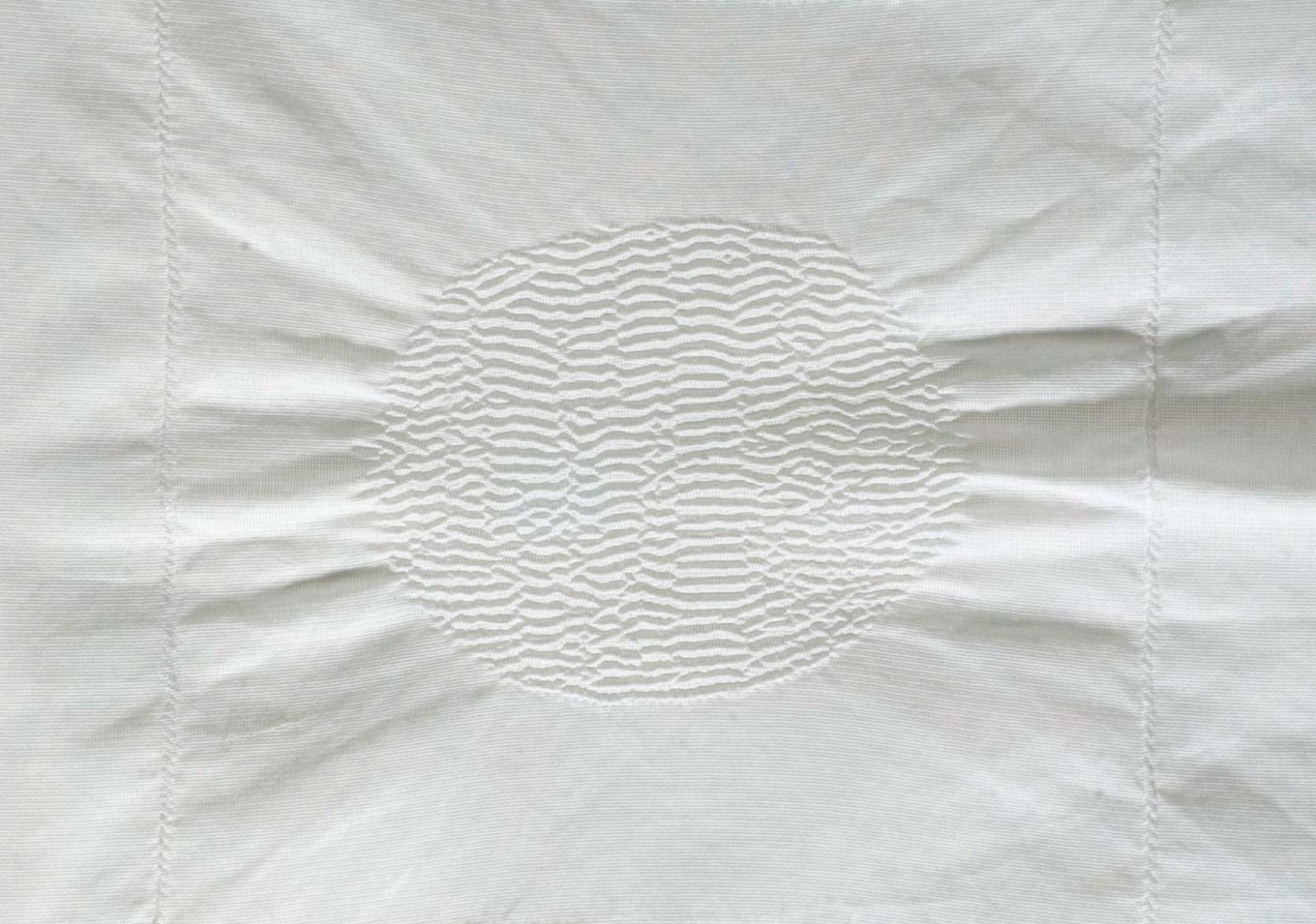


Ainslie Murray, *Wake Stitchings* (details), 2006
cotton, calico
3 panels, 30 x 30 cm each
photographs : Ainslie Murray



Mimi Tong, *Six Degrees of Separation (Drawing Two)* (detail), 2006
photographic collage, ink drawing, paper
77 x 58 cm
photograph : Craig Bender

opposite Ainslie Murray, *Untitled*, 2005
heat-set shaped cotton
40 x 40 cm
photograph : Ian Hobbs

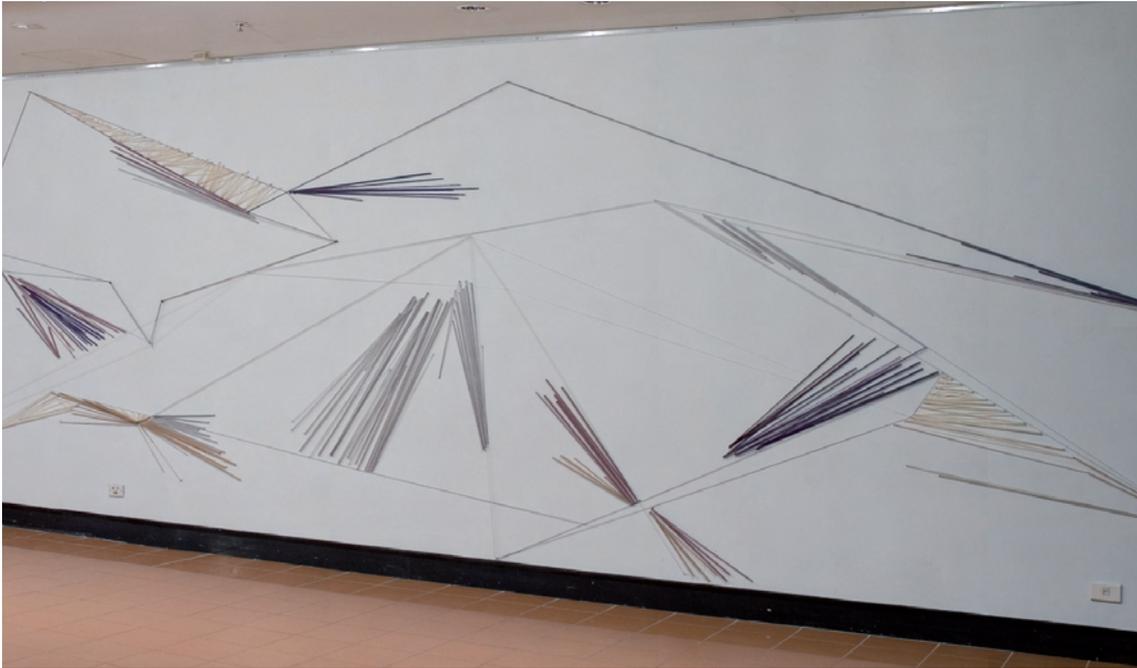






opposite Mimi Tong, *Enfolding* (detail), 2004
tyvek, tape
400 x 240 cm
photograph : Heidrun Lohr

Ainslie Murray, *Untitled* (detail), 2005
heat-set linen
120 x 100 cm
photograph : Ainslie Murray

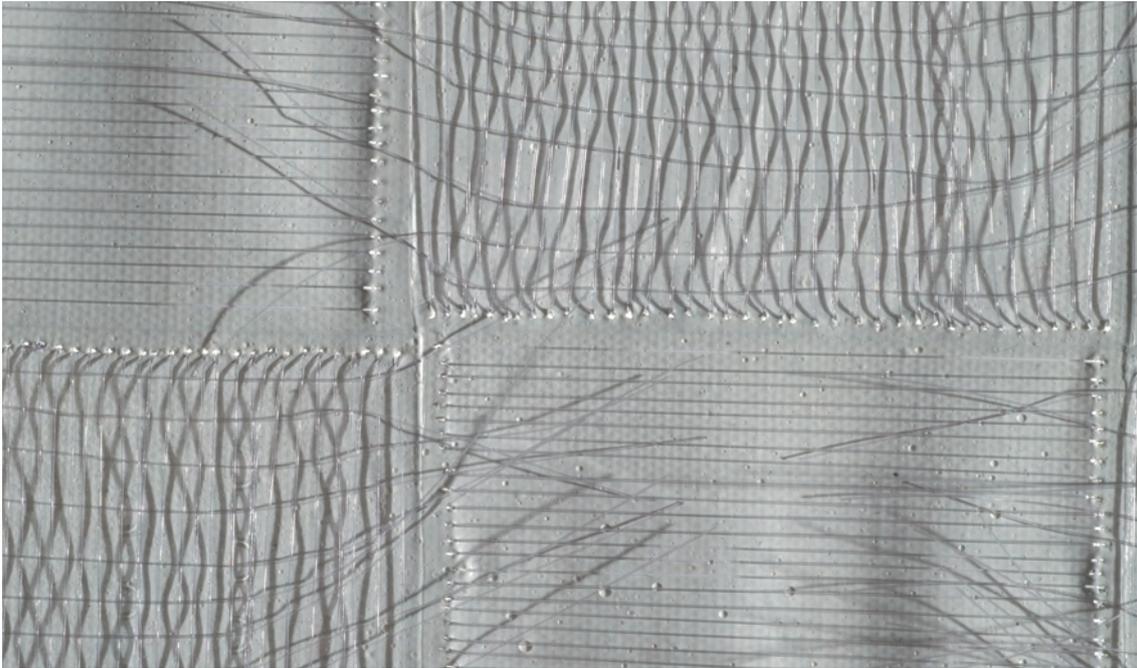


Mimi Tong, *The Mountaineering Project*, 2006
wool yarn, nails
1200 x 350 cm
photograph : Ian Hobbs

opposite Ainslie Murray, *Char DhamWalk (Garhwal)* (reverse side detail), 2007
acrylic, monofilament stitching, canvas
170 x 170 cm
photograph : Ian Hobbs







opposite Mimi Tong, *Six Degrees of Separation (Drawing One)*, 2006
photographic collage, ink drawing, paper
102 x 66 cm
photograph : Craig Bender

Ainslie Murray, *Jaal* (detail), 2007
acrylic, monofilament stitching, canvas
70 x 70 cm
photograph : Ian Hobbs

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