

YLAG



Dry black pastel

# Techniques

## On the study of light through works of dry black pastel on paper

I have attempted to present this selection of works by dividing them into series of different themes, each drawing me in obsessively, to then quite brutally disappear or sometimes to accompany me peacefully throughout the process. Dividing them into years seems random, but it shows the difficulties met, possible impasses, and revisited themes, especially in the figurative works.

Moving into a new cycle poses a dilemma. The feeling of security given by a known repetitive graphical structure and the anxiety of falling into something incidental are paired together in a what is almost a sleepy routine.

In a desire to surmount this anxiety, I must not rely on previously mastered technical gestures. I want to break the routine through changes—in the format or the texture of the paper perhaps—and especially observation and continuous analysis of the theme of the series that I am working on. *Why does something work in one case and not in another?*

It is an attempt to create emotion based on pure design, in a monochrome abstract work, which I hope is uncompromising

.

## Figurative elements (2004–2006)

Rigorous representation that is precise in realism has always fascinated me. *L'Allegorie du peintre* ("The painter's allegory") is without a doubt the oldest memory I have of a work of art.

Many of my first works in dry black pastel were created *in situ*, at local contests, given a limited time, in order to showcase local architecture.

*Pilier* is a good example of one of a few pastels that fully capture the pleasure of observational drawing, and it has been indispensable to me.

But the slide towards the abstract happened immediately if not before, like a necessary moulting, losing my marks of reference, allowing me to discover the *state of things* (*L'état des choses*).

Pilier-65x50



Hôtel 50x65

As much as *abbaye2* and *hotel* once again sustain architectural reality, *lavoir-miroir* and *zenith noir* are on the fringe of this: they open the universe of possibilities by more or less deconstructing conscience from reality, layer by layer, like a boundless dissection of elements observed. But the elements in question are always there, more or less hidden, certainly broken, but present nonetheless.



Lavoir-miroir- 50x65



Zenith.noir

50x65

(It is interesting to note that my work that is most successful in pure drawing is *extension P* (120 cm-by-120 cm pastel), done in 2009 in memory of a Parisian museum, a moment of Bohemian tranquility at the full heart of the city: a space transfigured by a contemporary architecture, without concession, and which I was obliged to adopt



*ExtensionP* – 120x120

It is also the sole work that I agreed to produce with photographic support, even if it was a personal photograph.

The ambiguity of research...)

*These two years comprised an astonishingly rich period in which I truly had the impression of discovering my area of work, my own little ecological niche in a way, and a progressive mastery of this little piece of black chalk*

## Fragments of light (2004–2008)

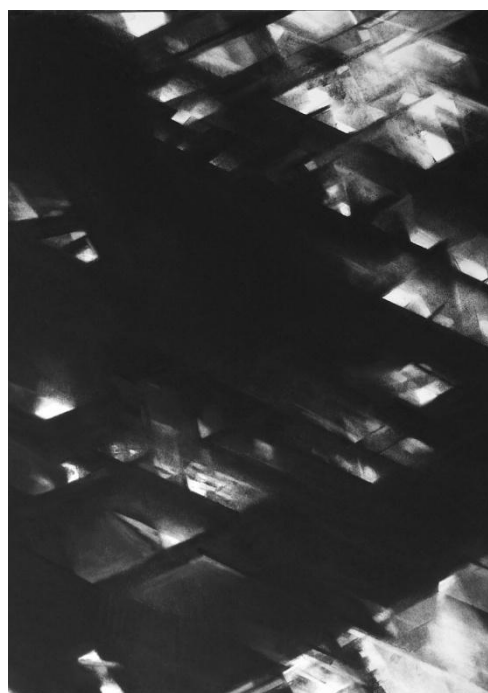
In *lavoir-miroir*, beyond the deconstruction of the building, appear independent phenomena of light, small optical vibrations that will rapidly become that which I refer to as my “little fragments of light.”

They are already there in the background, still a bit hesitant, and then taking on their proper life becoming the real base of my work.

Multiplication of diagonals, of scintillating parallels



Cristallographie 50x65

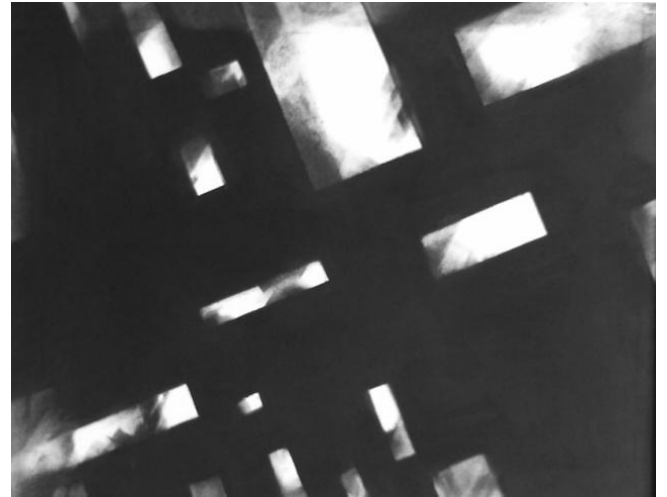


La chute 65x50

Reality disappears behind a luminous kaleidoscope, as in *cristallographie* or *les grands bancs*, or in the juxtaposition of deep blacks with pure whites (*albedo, incidence*).



Les grands bancs 65x50



Albedo étrange 50x65

I try to only to conserve the light, to play only with its impalpable quanta, and above all to make the deep framing black vibrate.

In the end, the black pastel becomes autonomous, stripped of all figurative references. With these dazzling blacks and the powerful contrast they create with the white of the paper, I can, perhaps, grasp onto a few passing photons



Tri-D 50x65

My fragments of light continue evolving today, integrated in new discoveries, essentially architectural for the present.



Incidence 50x65

Works outside of reality, but very often conceived outside of the studio, among other artists and passers by.

It is an exercise of intense concentration, and also in learning first-hand from the reactions of others.

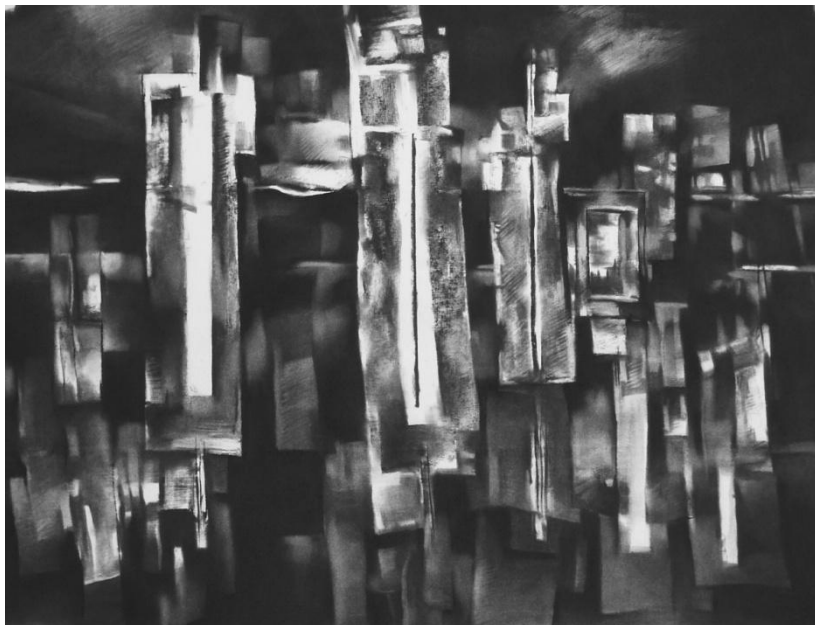
## Rectangles (2005–2006)

Bizarrely, as I was abandoning figurative references little by little, here I was creating imaginary landscapes, where groups of fishermen pass along the coast or banners float amid oyster farms



Ostrea 50x65

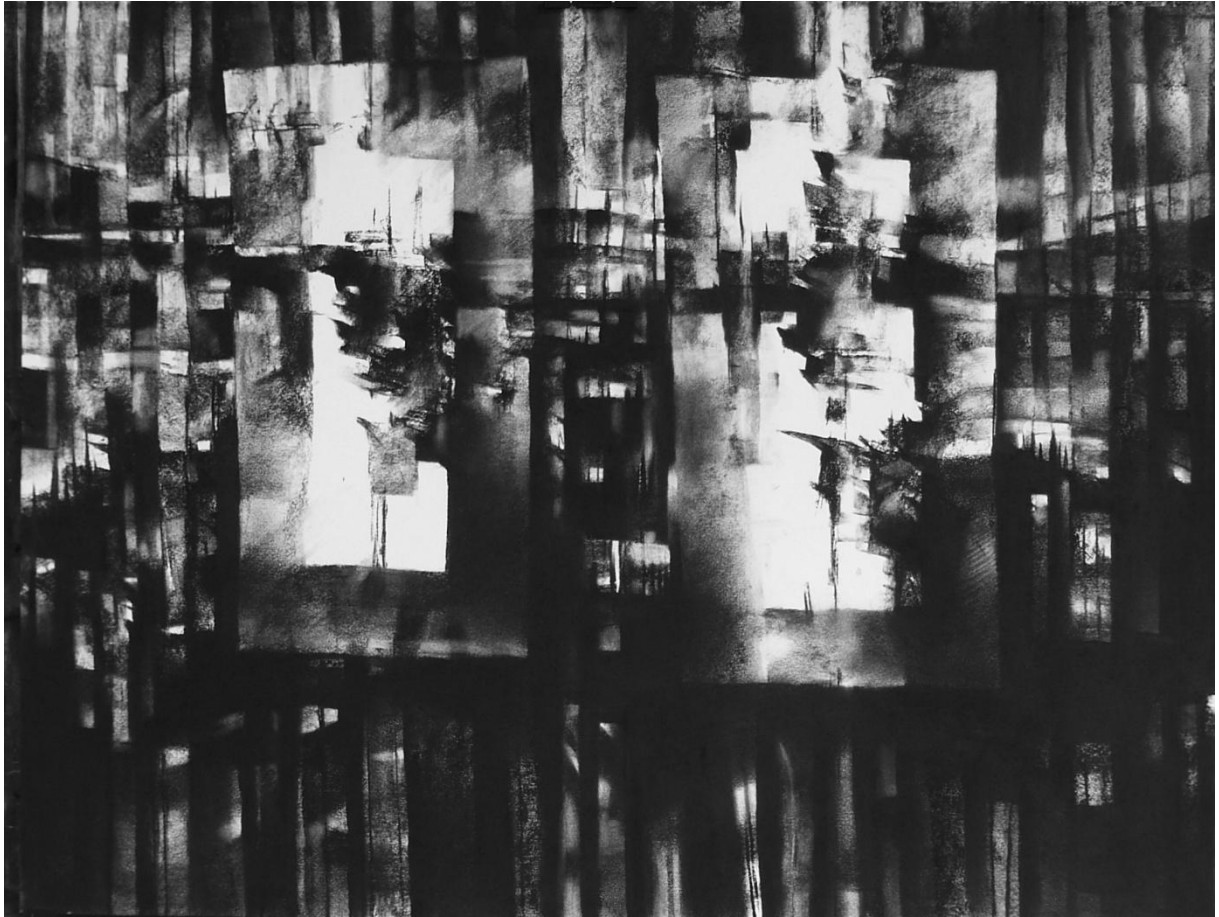
This was a brief exploration, though graphically intense. But without a doubt, I was missing pure light already



pêcherie 50x65



However, this came to a conclusion with *Zone portuaire*, reminiscent of the stays in the suspended bridge near Le Havre, drowning in a red sun of industrial pollution.



Zone portuaire 50x65

This work brought the small series to a close: the following attempts fell short and would forever remain rough sketches.

However, the importance of this pastel work would be capital in my subsequent research into imaginary architecture: among others, this work is a reference, a crucial step, a slightly magical moment where something happened between the paper and the birth of the drawing.

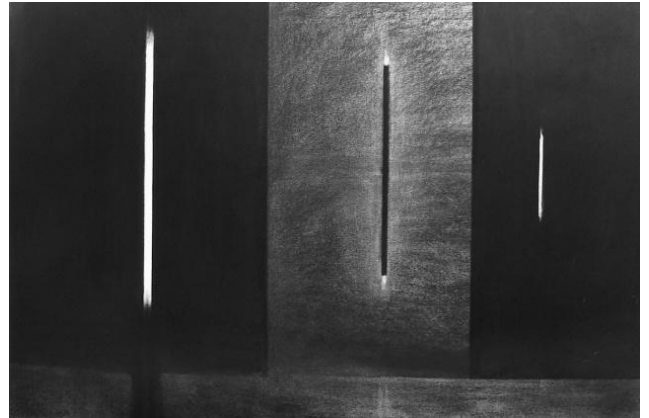
## Optic Diffraction (2004-2008)

This theme appeared quite early

First, there was *Sentinelle* and then, more importantly, *Tryptique* one of my first large formats.



sentinelle 50x65



Tryptique 75x110

*Tryptique*, a staging point, was an opening towards new graphical possibilities but much darker and more sedate. A simpler form, a reply to that great profusion of shards of light with one great difficulty: how to make a tiny fissure respond to an immensity of velvety grey?

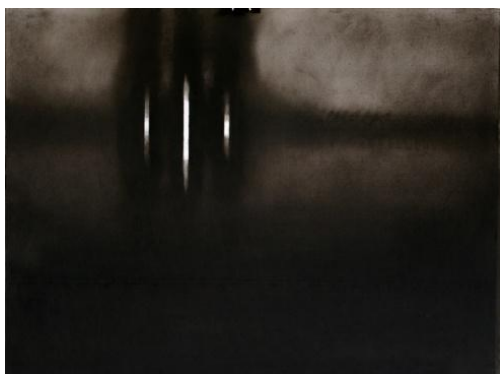


Rivages 50x65



iles2 70x70

*Iles* (islands) or *Rivages* (shores) still visible, or the graphic purity of *Rencontres* (meetings) and *Témoins* (witnesses).

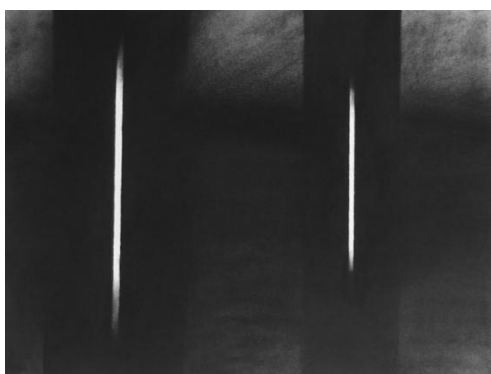


Rencontres 50x65



Témoins 50x65

This is a world of silence, a unique moment in which I could drown out all intrusive noise (studio work, *Silence*) but also moments of total serenity outside, protected from and by the endless resonance of the rain (*Silence3*)



Silence 50x65



Silence3

70x70

Some attempts are hardly legible, moving towards a progressive extinction of light: the light segment covering in a blanket of grayish black, the world disappearing into a dark glaze.



glacis3

I felt I had to leave all this, at least for a time.

But, in retrospect, when I look at these works, I can feel their importance and I know I will be back at some point. They are timeless beacons, reference points in the surrounding obscurity (**Argos**).

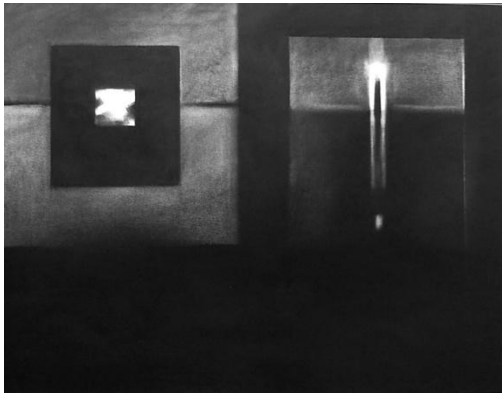


Argos 70x100

Some of these works have a square parallel to the light segment (**Vidéo**), bringing me to a series called **Carré Flottant** (Floating Square), a two dimensional acknowledgement of the purity of line.

## Floating Square (2006-2008)

As it had been for Optical Slits, for several months, probably from *Vidéo* and *Marécage* (Marsh) on, I was compelled to work on this theme, still composing under the influence of the line and vibrating light.



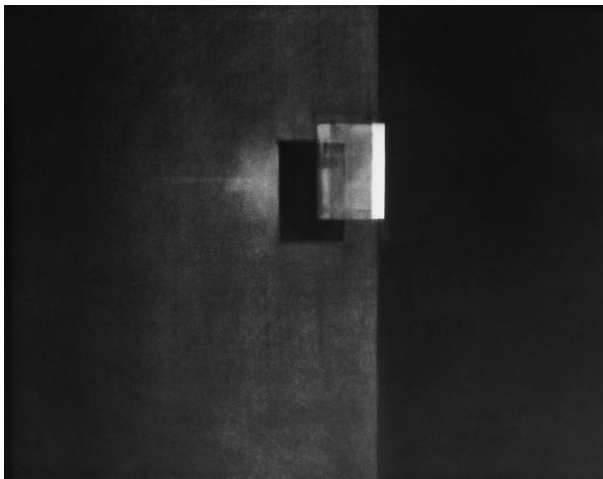
Video3 50x65



Marécage50x65

The real beginning was *Solaris*:

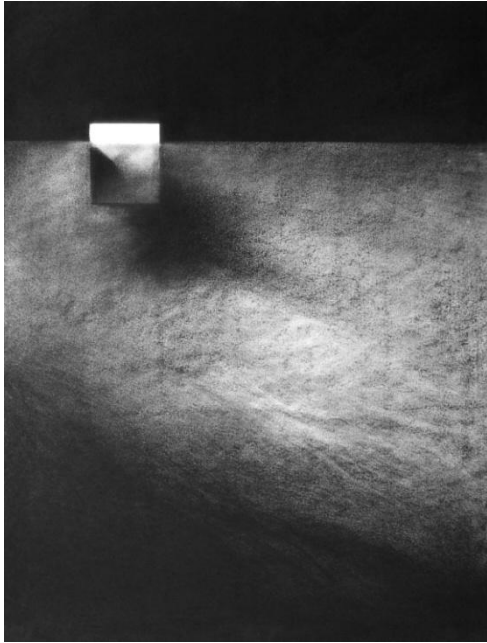
A simple, small geometric element enlarging space on different planes. This phenomenon is particularly visible in *Carré flottant*.



Solaris 50x65



Carré flottant 60x80

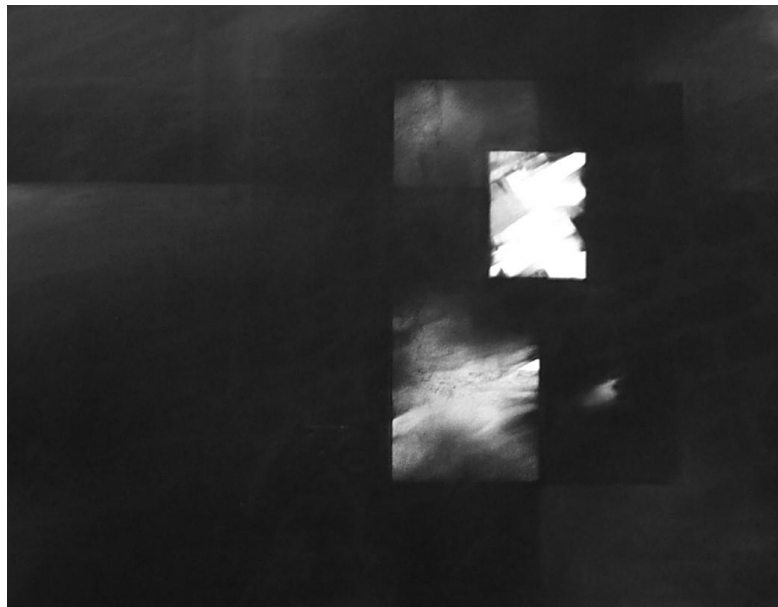


Avril brisé 65x50



Cyana 65x50

**Avril brisé** (Broken April) or **Cyana** rest in the fathomless abyss of some unknown extrasolar planet, illuminated by invisible oceanographic machines as in **Etat des choses** (The state of things)



Etat des choses 50x65

And then there is ***Partita***, a slightly off-kilt, fragile balance. Important, as it would bring about some of the pastels in **Architecture** and also because it is *movement*.



Partita 50x65

As it is with **Optic Diffraction**, this series has come to a halt for the moment, the last few tries seeming too laborious. Nothing is preventing me, of course, from continuing some day...

## Oblique Light (from 2007)

A little more than two years ago, I was struggling with these different themes, turning in several different directions which I could feel were slowly closing in. There was still some room but I needed an opening.

**Stalker** appeared in a few swipes of hand and eraser.



Stalker 70x100

The complete series of [Oblique Light](#) and part of [Architecture](#) originate from this work.

Aside from **Zone portuaire** (created at the end of a track, so to speak!), few other works have had as big an influence. What was going to occur would be a veritable revelation to me. I knew instantly that an essential pathway was opened: a great new intake of breath and a gasp of relief.

Inspired perhaps by some images of a Russian film, by the omnipresence of water, **Stalker** is only an oblique light cushioned by opaque black and softened with a stump, dark and lacquered, in which the light slips and plays.



So, in just a few hours of work, here is a pastel which lives perfectly but whose existence is difficult for me to explain: what happened in those few moments? And why did I have the feeling of immediate graphic success?

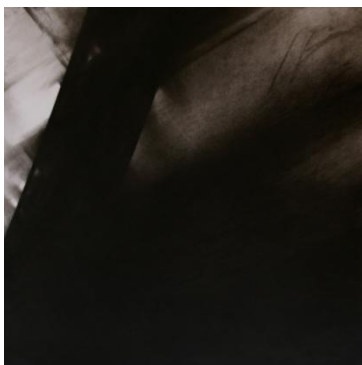
Following this would come **Corniche**, a very large format which would show just how much **Stalker** had renewed my confidence.



Corniche

120x120

And the tryptique **Carrés Noirs** (Black Squares) **Sentier**, **Tangentiel**, **Transparence**.



Sentier 70x70



Tangentiel 70x70



Transparence

70x70

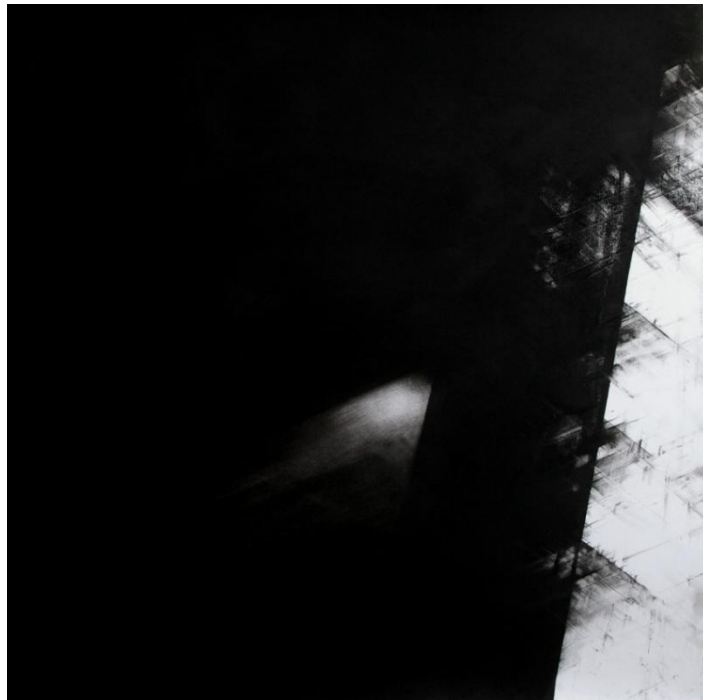
**Mémorial-2001** and **Miroir** (Mirror), both among the last of this series along with **Ancien Monde** (Old World) are closer to the architectural theme than they appear to be.



Ancien monde 70x100



Miroir 60x80



Mémorial-2001 120x120

In any case, I think I have made here an authentic headway, one that is the most personally enriching and one that I continue researching.

## Architectures (from 2005)

In 2005, a piece of paper with a few traces of pastel waits idly in the studio. I walk around it, and pick it up, prepared to crumple and abandon it forever. But...No. I put it back and started *Architecture*.



Architecture 50x65

Then *Arkéo* and then more...



Arkeo 50x65

Put aside for a moment, this series comes to life again with ***Babel*** and following works like ***Lhasa***.



Babel 100x70



Lhasa  
100x70

***Lhasa*** came to me mysteriously. Not the slightest hesitation in my movements, just the exhilarating sensation of the paper squeaking under the pastel, a feeling of absolute confidence... ***Lhasa***, bought too quickly after its creation and which I still miss today... I would like to observe it, bath in its presence, understand the alchemy present at its making.

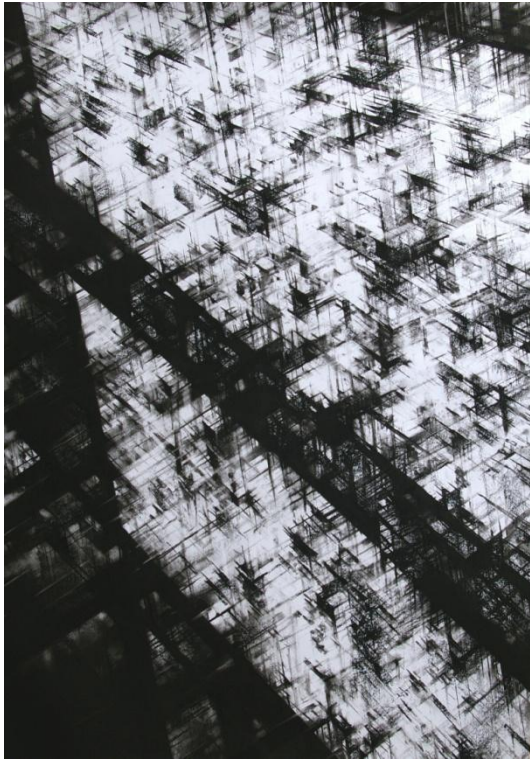
As for *Cité Interdite* (Forbidden city), it was a long and arduous work, tense, full of anxiety about the time limit I had.



Cité interdite 100x100

Hours and hours spent connecting all the tiny elements of construction floating everywhere.  
In the end, it held together.

**Rêve Américain** (American Dream) and **Architecture2** identify with New York facades: disturbing low-angle shots, destabilizing standpoints, a balcony becomes an avenue, a window transformed into a moving projector.

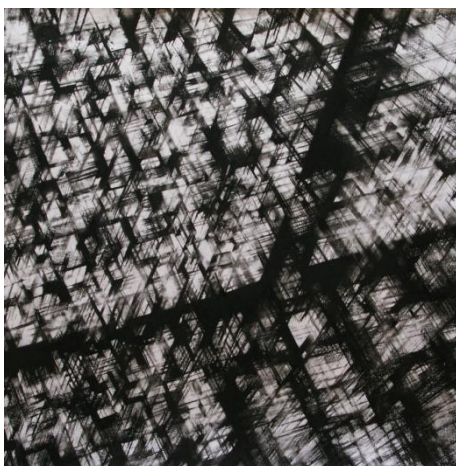


Rêve américain 100x70

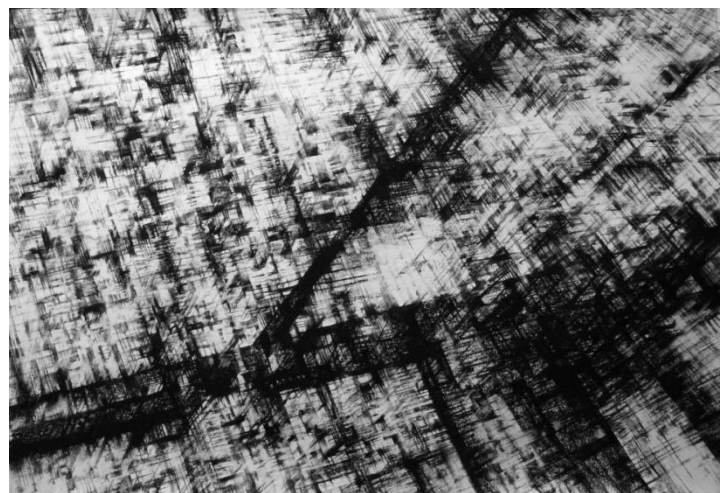


Architecture2 65x50

A few works followed in their wake (**Façades**, **Reseau**)...

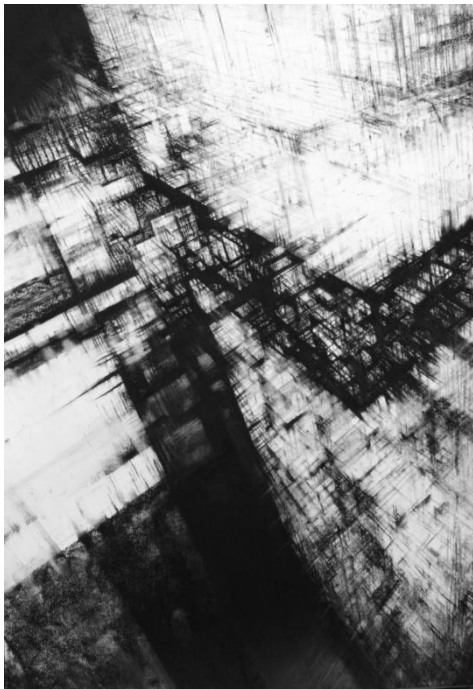


Façades 70x70



reseau 70x100

Others like *Métropole* and *NY-Avenue* become illuminated like incandescent buildings ready to tumble.



Metropole 100x70



NY-avenue 100x70

But there is also this symbiosis between [Oblique Light](#) and [Architecture](#), found in *Décoffrage* (unmolding) then *Organisme* and *d'Implosion*.

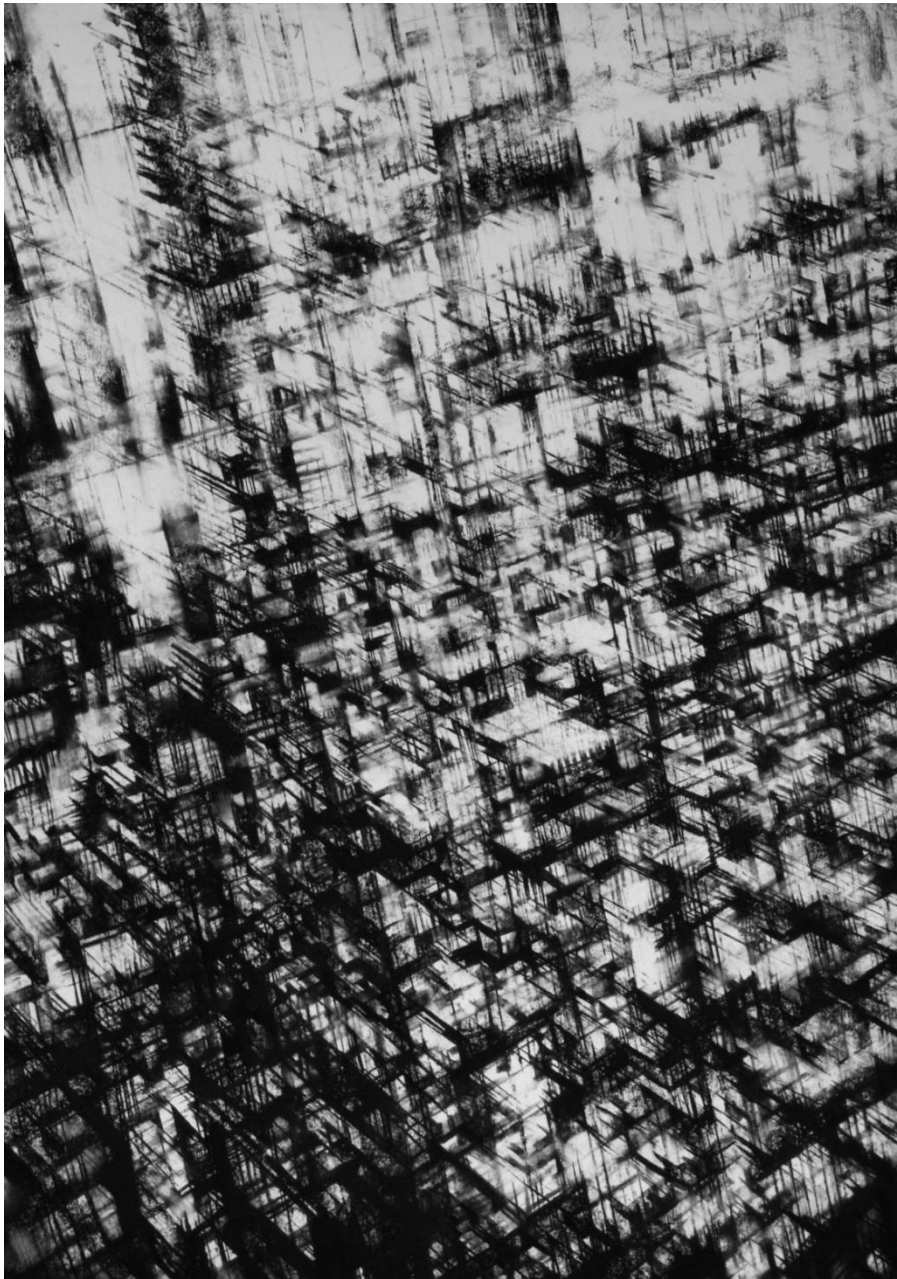


Décoffrage 100x50



Organisme 100x70

The light in these case is a pretext for destroying the framework, and dissolving the scaffolding that supports *Megapoles*.



Mégapole 100x70

Thus, **Oblique Light** melds with **Architectures**. I still hope to use the richness of this theme before I reach saturation.



## Other directions?

And what of today ?

I continue exploring the last two themes in works such as *Cascade* or *Azia*.

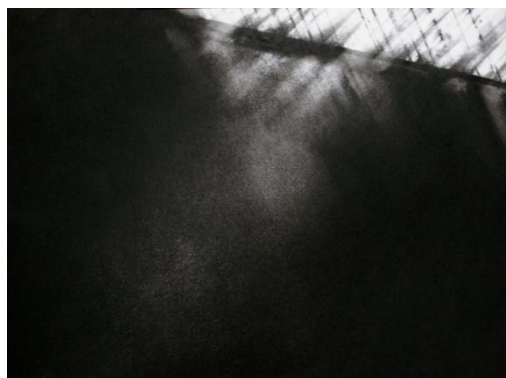


Cascade 70x100

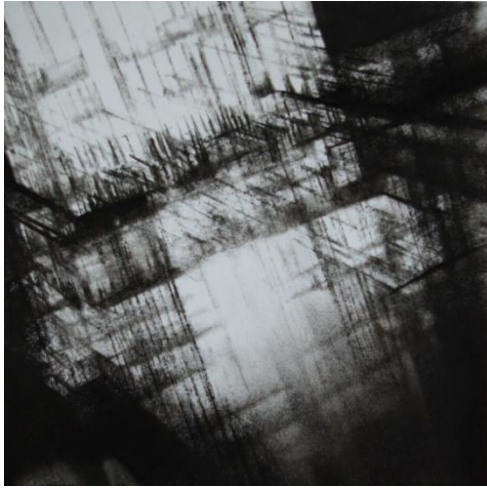


Azia 100x70

Having been asked for smaller formats, I produced a series of variations on *Stalker* which now live almost autonomously.



Variation6 30x40



Factory1 40x40



Factory2 30x40

The smaller formats evolved into small **factories**: small cubic spaces rich in industrial waste lands.

I have also gone in other directions which for the most part are technical works like **Baliverna** and **Perseides**.



Baliverna 120x120



Perseides1 70x70

And above all, a series called **Gravures** (engravings) where simplicity reigns and from wherein I have begun further explorations...

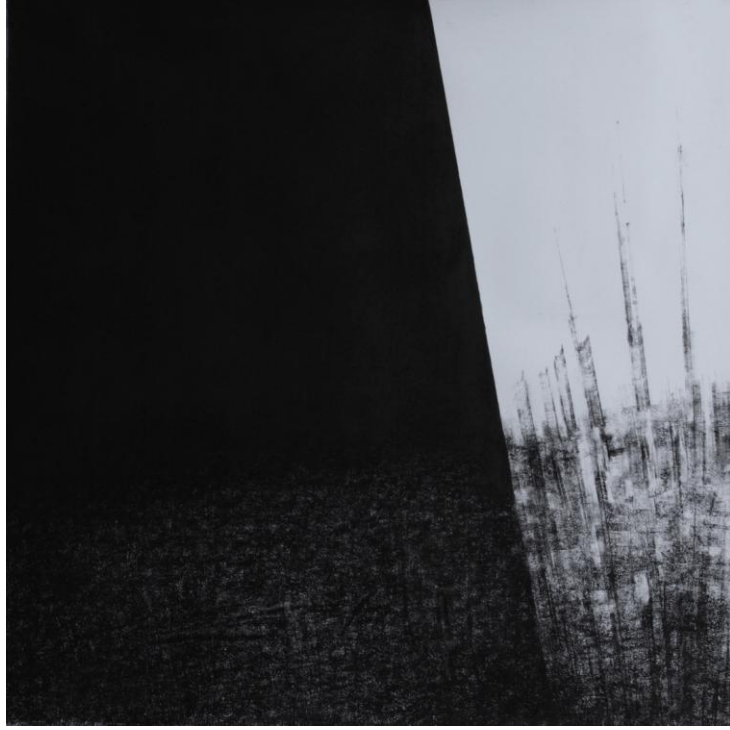


Gravure – 120x120



gravure 2 - 100x100

gravure5 – 100x100



Artefact – 100x100

