



VARIOUS SMALL FIRES  
812 NORTH HIGHLAND AVENUE LOS ANGELES 90038  
INFO@VSF.LA / 310.426.8040

**LENA DALY**

## LENA DALY

Born 1986 Charleston, SC

Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA

### Education

- 2015 MFA, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA
- 2011 Mountain School of Art, Los Angeles, CA
- 2009 BFA, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA

### Solo Exhibitions

- 2016 *Night Bell*, Various Small Fires, Los Angeles, CA  
Balice Hertling, Paris, France (Solo Project)  
Art Basel Miami Beach Film Sector, Miami Beach, FL (Forthcoming)

### Group Exhibitions

- 2015 *Year of the Goose*, Either Way, Los Angeles, CA  
*Deep Dark Submersion*, curated by Sarah Lehrer-Grewair, Romer Young Gallery, San Francisco  
*Fragment*, CLA New Wright Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2012 *Café Hardcore Metaphor*, Fourteen30 Contemporary, Portland, OR
- 2010 *Tropical Contact High*, Mission School of Fine Art, San Francisco, CA  
*It Was the Hottest Temperature Recorded*, Garten Studio, Berlin, Germany
- 2009 Justin Beal, Lena Daly, Kate Owens, Jancar Jones Gallery, San Francisco, CA  
*Ulli and Lucrecia's Lustige Gruppenausstellung Mit Party*, Five Thirty Three Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
*Recovered Reflections*, Envoy Enterprises, New York, NY  
*Children of the Revolution*, curated by Keith Boadwee, Federal Art Project, Los Angeles, CA  
*The Last of the Mojitos*, Queen's Nails Annex, San Francisco, CA  
*The New Young Turks*, Baer Ridgeway Gallery, San Francisco, CA



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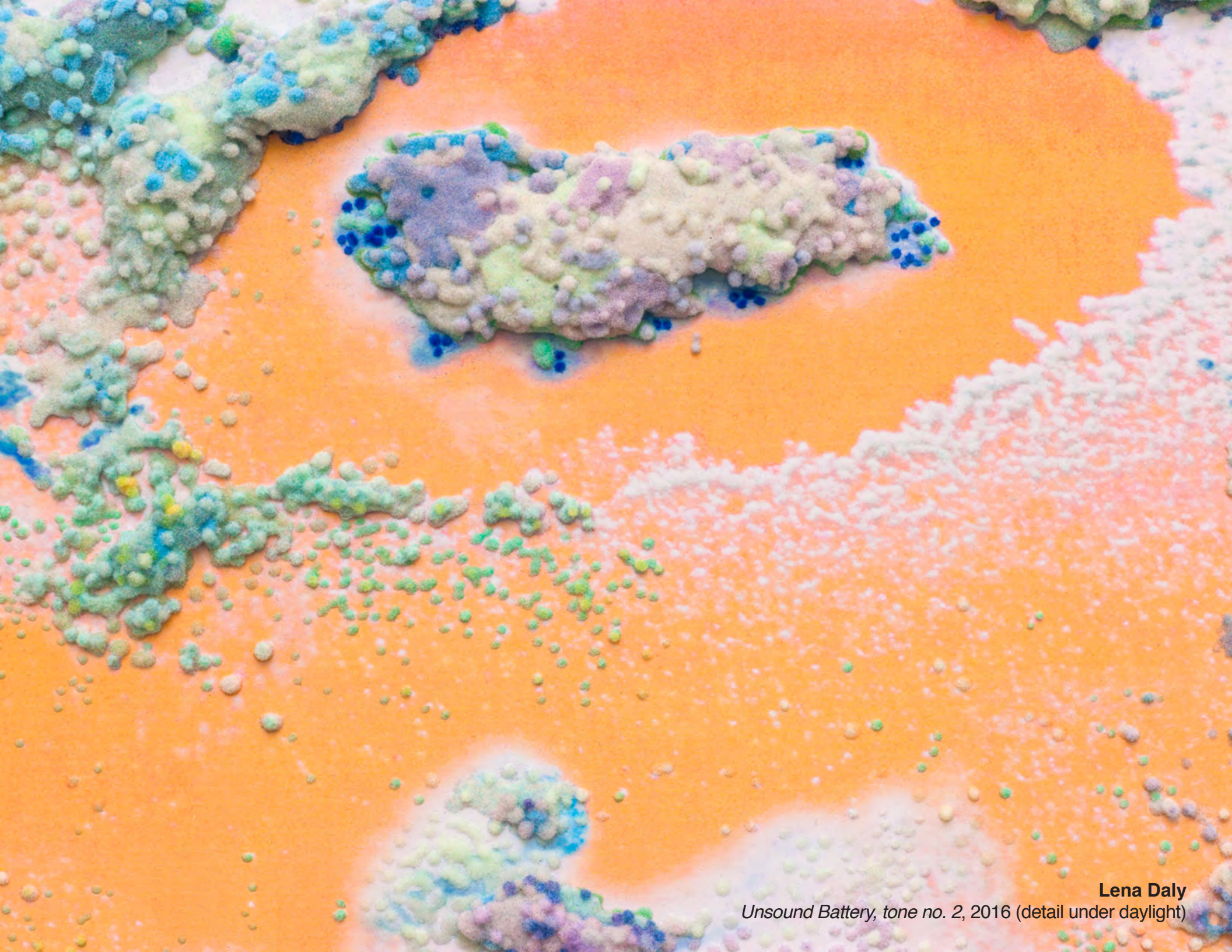
**LENA DALY**  
**SELECTED WORKS AND EXHIBITIONS**

VARIOUS SMALL FIRES  
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**Lena Daly**  
*Unsound Battery, tone no. 2*, 2016  
UV-reactive flock on vinyl, UV-reactive  
oil paint, wood, LED UV light  
28 x 26.5 x 2 in

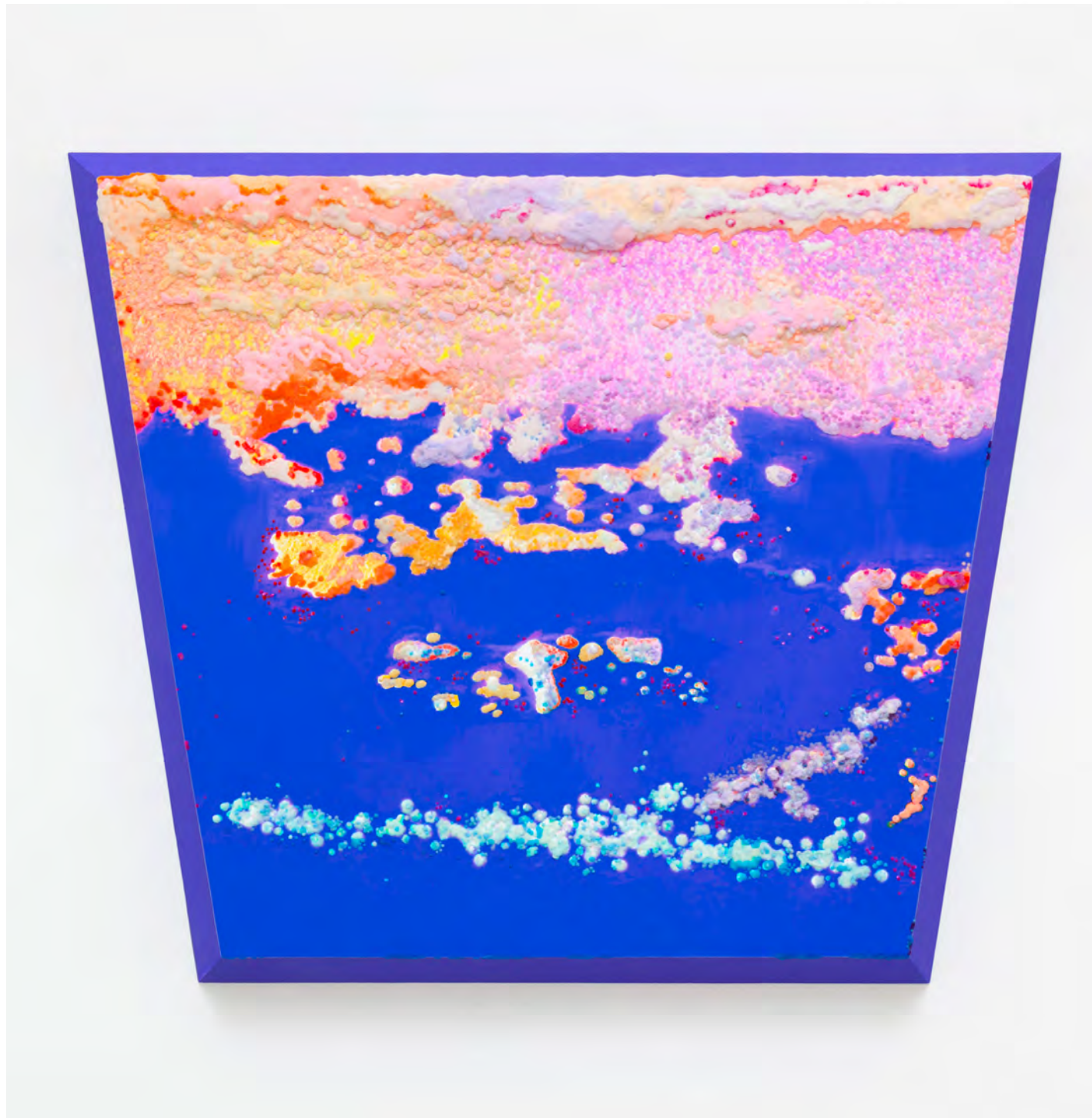




**Lena Daly**  
*Unsound Battery, tone no. 2, 2016 (detail under daylight)*



**VSF**



**Lena Daly**

*Unsound Battery, tone no. 3*, 2016

UV-reactive flock on vinyl, UV-reactive oil  
paint, wood, LED UV light

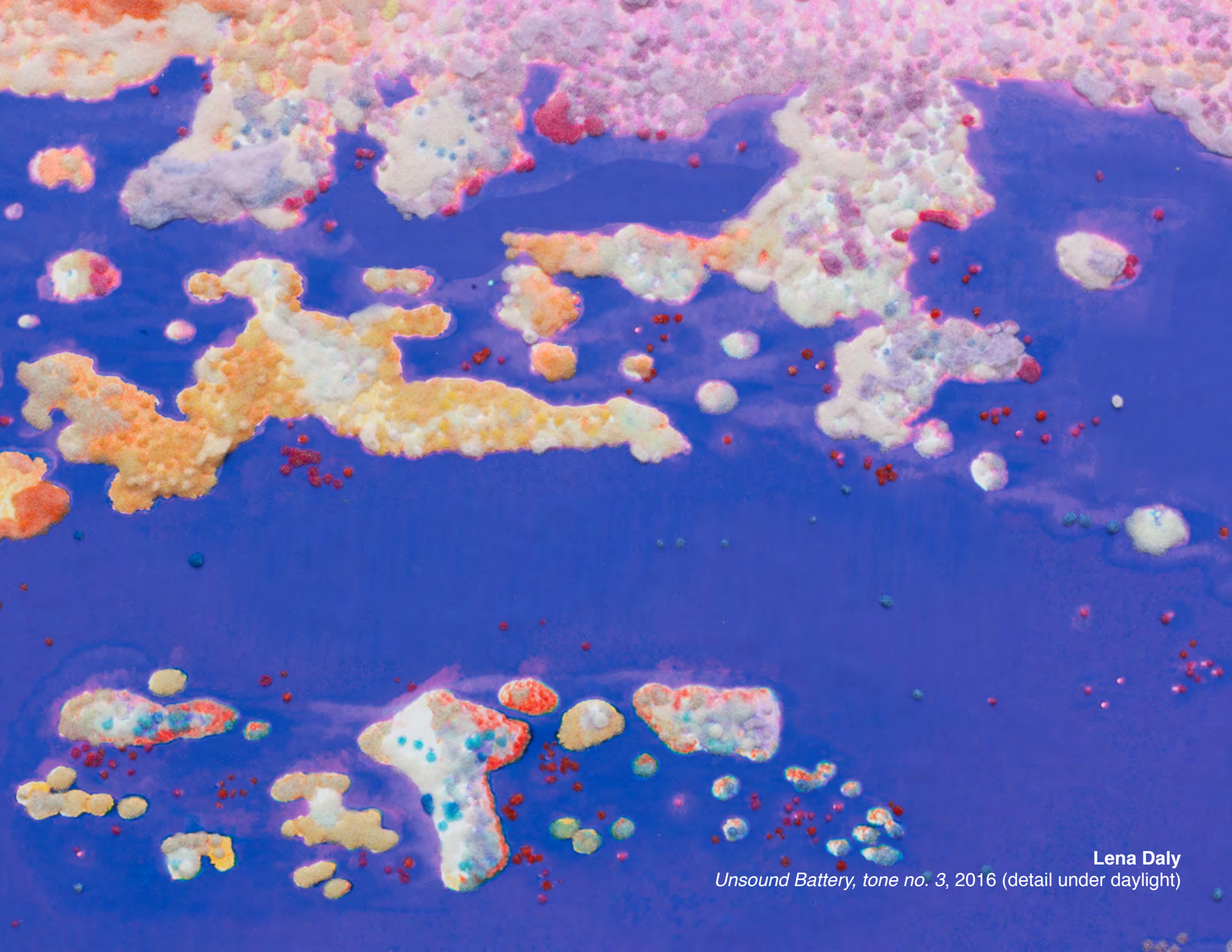
25 x 30 x 2 in

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**Lena Daly**  
*Unsound Battery, tone no. 3, 2016*  
(detail photographed under daylight)





Lena Daly

*Unsound Battery, tone no. 3, 2016 (detail under daylight)*

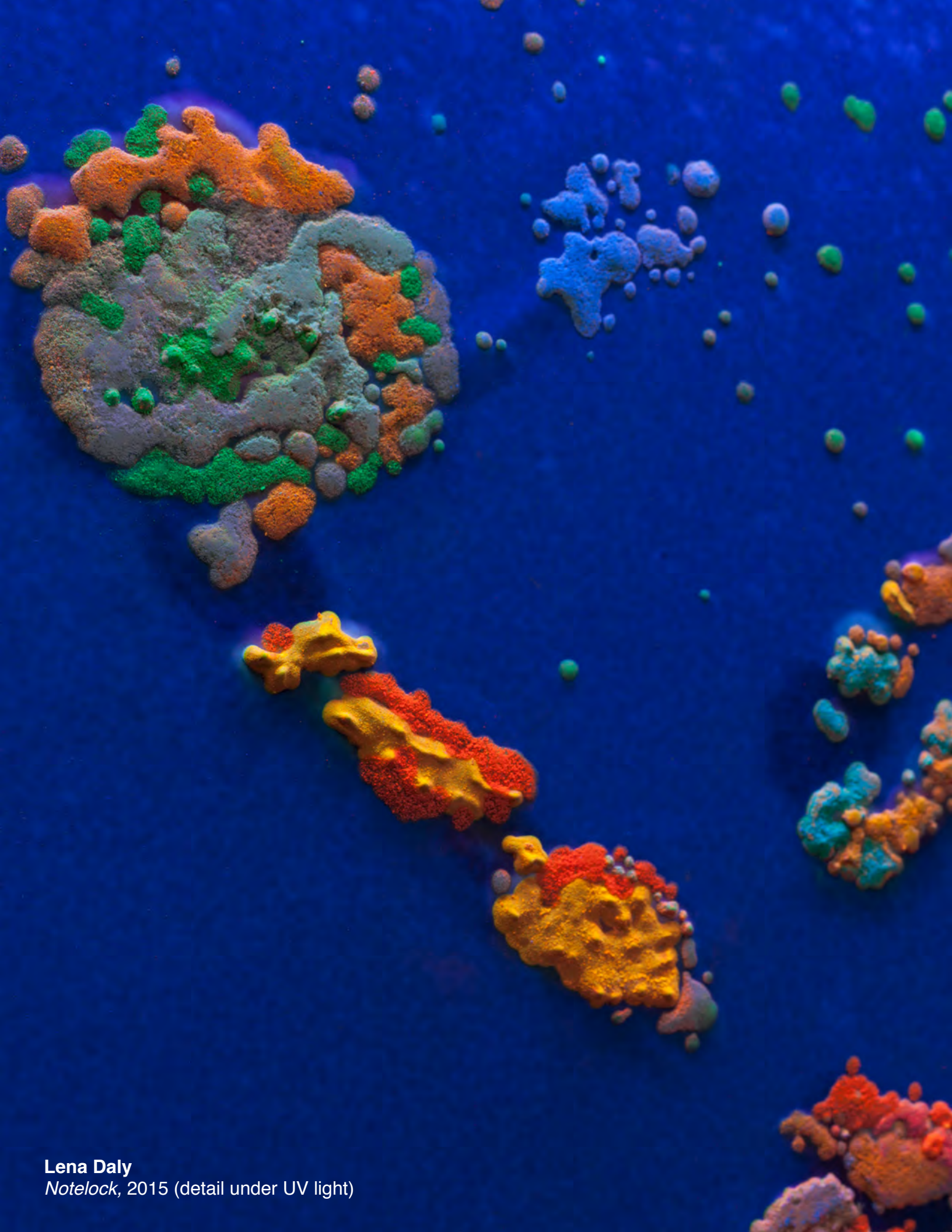


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**Lena Daly**  
*Notelock*, 2016 (under daylight)  
UV-reactive chalk on vinyl,  
40.5 x 39.5 x 4.25 in (102.87 x 100.33 x 10.8 cm)





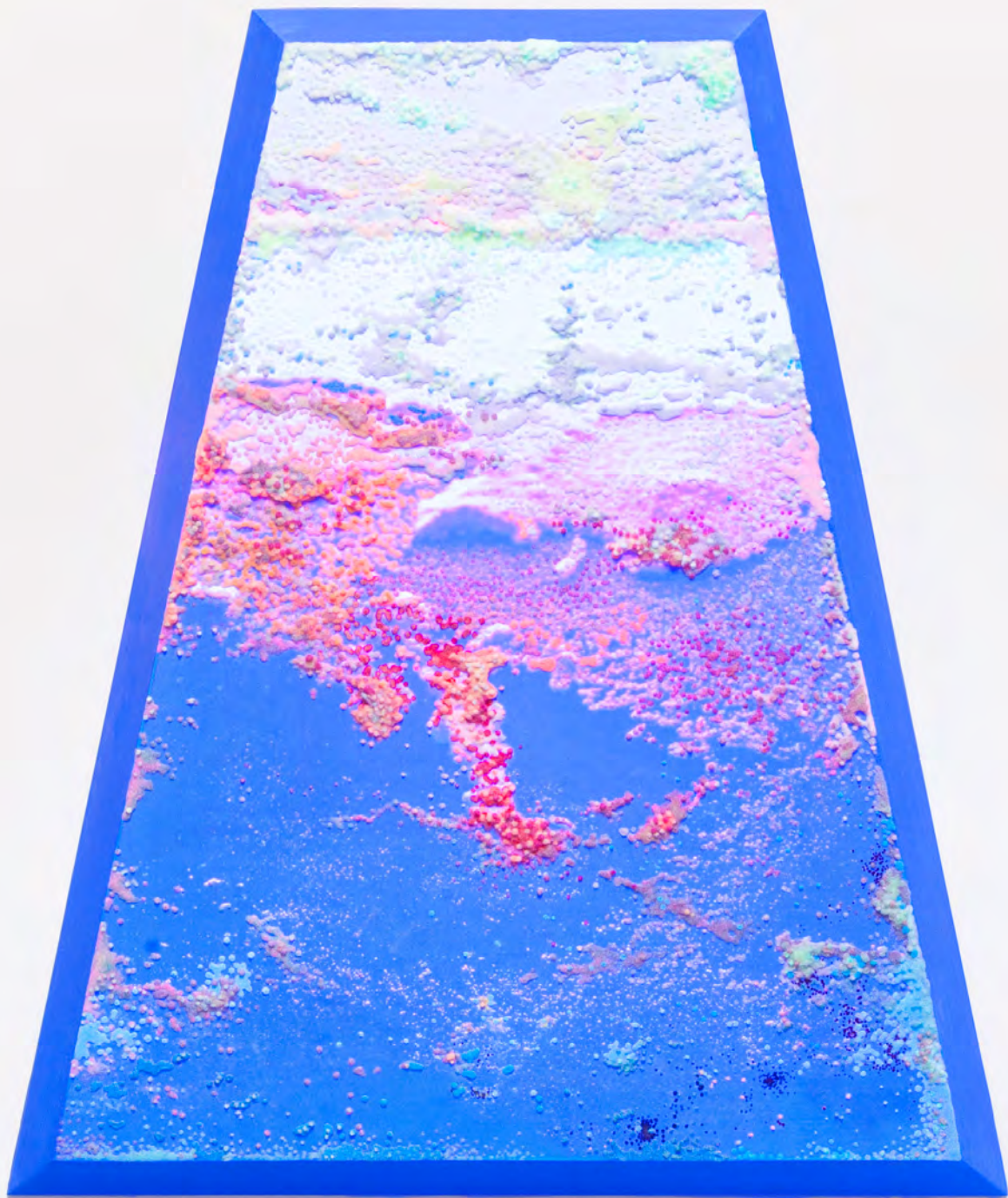
**Lena Daly**  
*Notelock*, 2015 (detail under UV light)





**Lena Daly**  
*Notelock*, 2015 (detail under UV light)



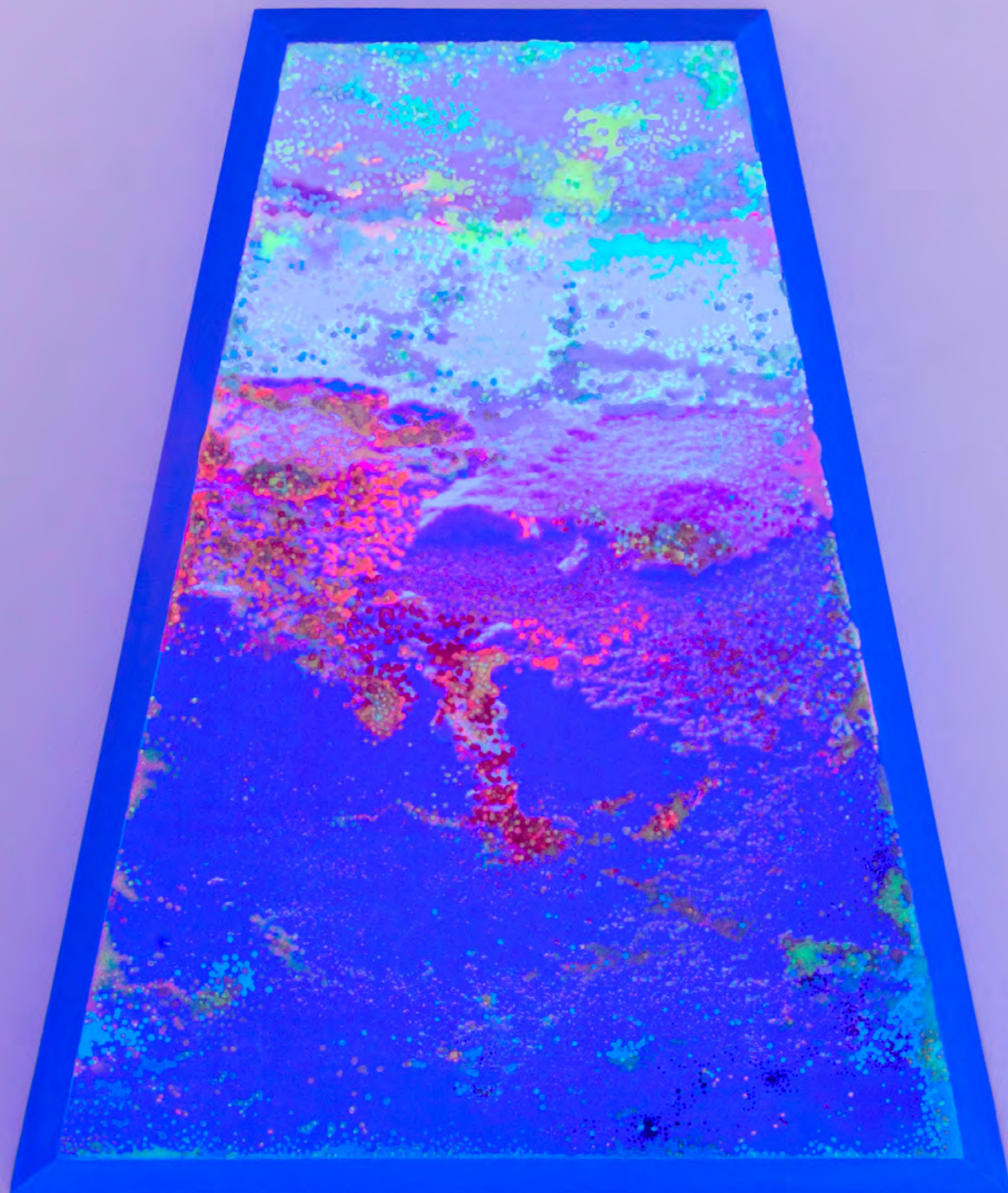


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**Lena Daly**  
*Unsound Battery, tone no. 1*, 2016  
UV-reactive flock on vinyl, UV-reactive  
oil paint, wood, LED UV light  
25 x 22.5 x 2 in

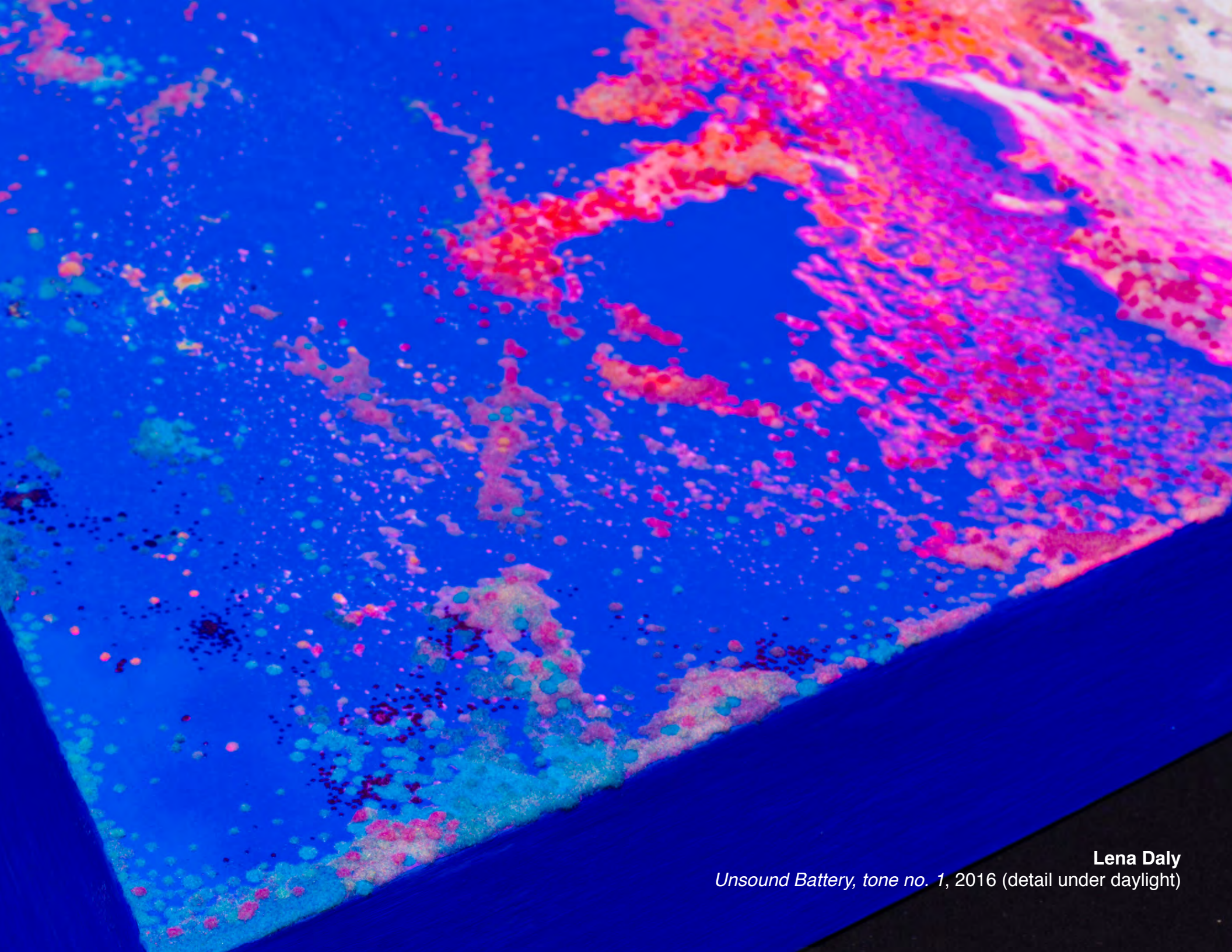


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**Lena Daly**  
*Unsound Battery, tone no. 1*, 2016  
(photographed under UV light)





**Lena Daly**

*Unsound Battery, tone no. 1, 2016 (detail under daylight)*





**Lena Daly**  
Installation View, 2015  
Various Small Fires, Los Angeles

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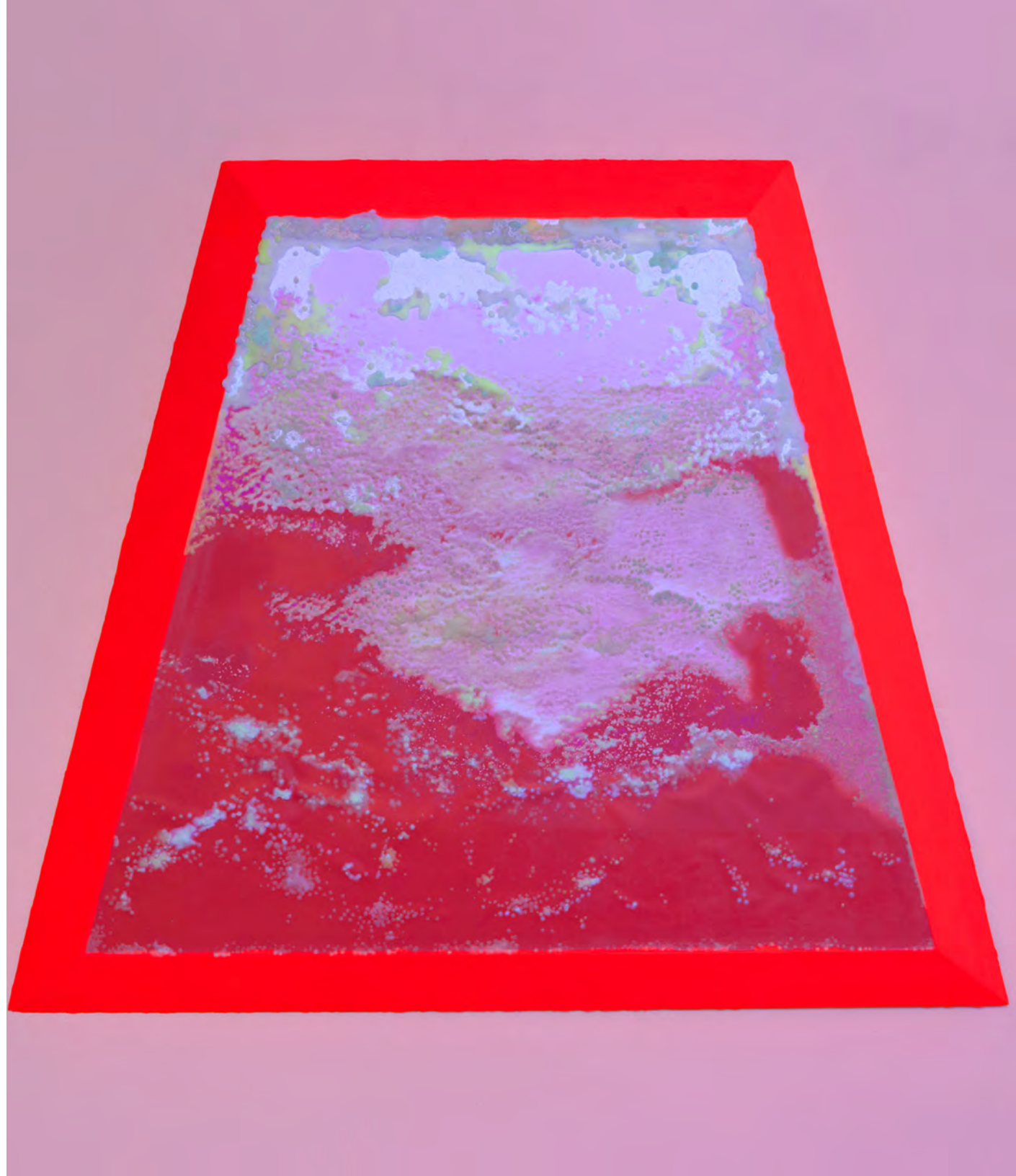
**Lena Daly**  
*Re-Charge Battery*, 2015 (under daylight)  
UV-reactive chalk on vinyl,  
UV-reactive oil paint, wood, LED UV light  
32.5 x 22.5 x 4 in (82.55 x 57.15 x 10.16 cm)



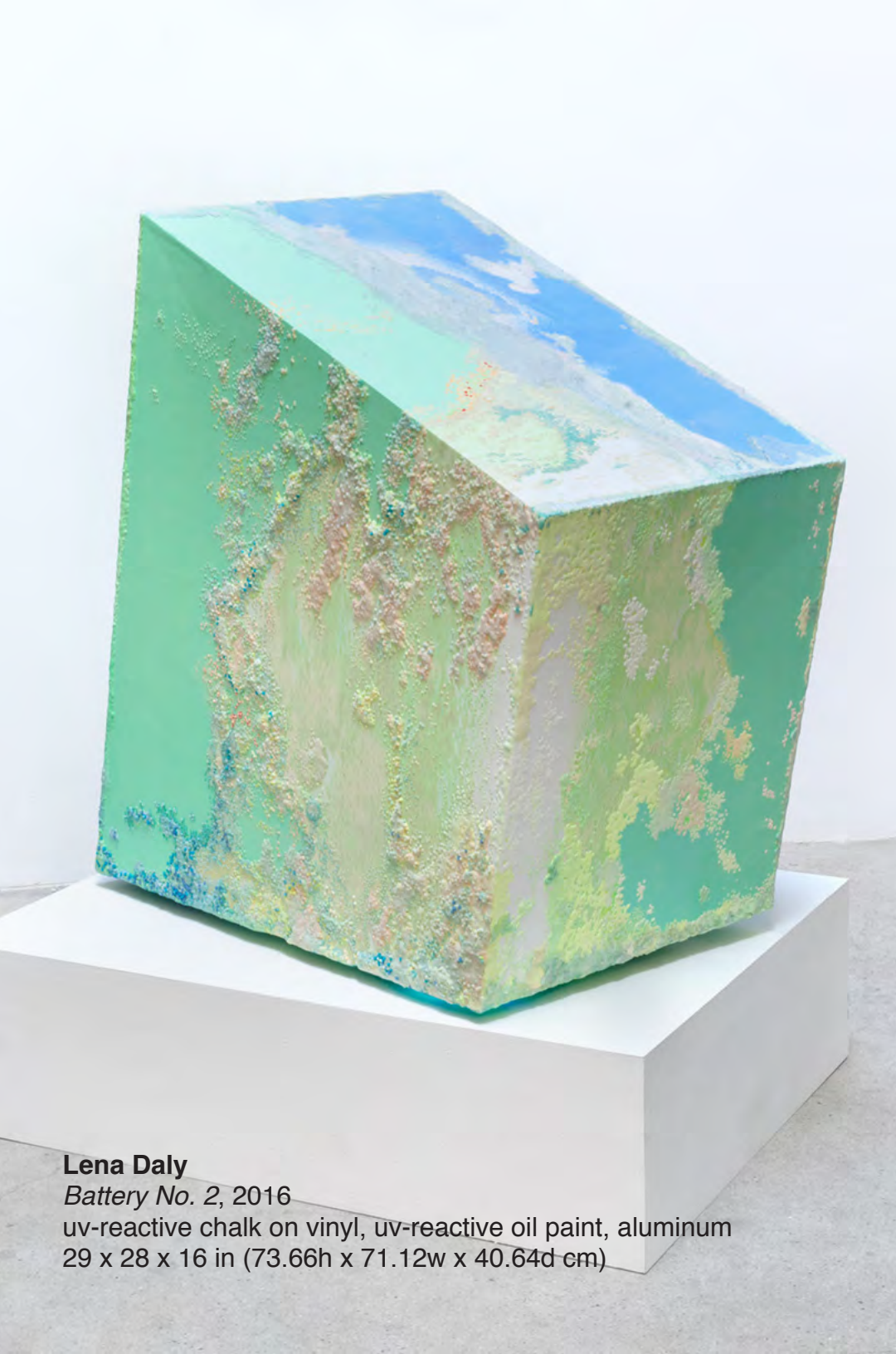
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**Lena Daly**

*Re-Charge Battery*, 2015 (under UV light)  
UV-reactive chalk on vinyl,  
UV-reactive oil paint, wood, LED UV light  
32.5 x 22.5 x 4 in (82.55 x 57.15 x 10.16 cm)



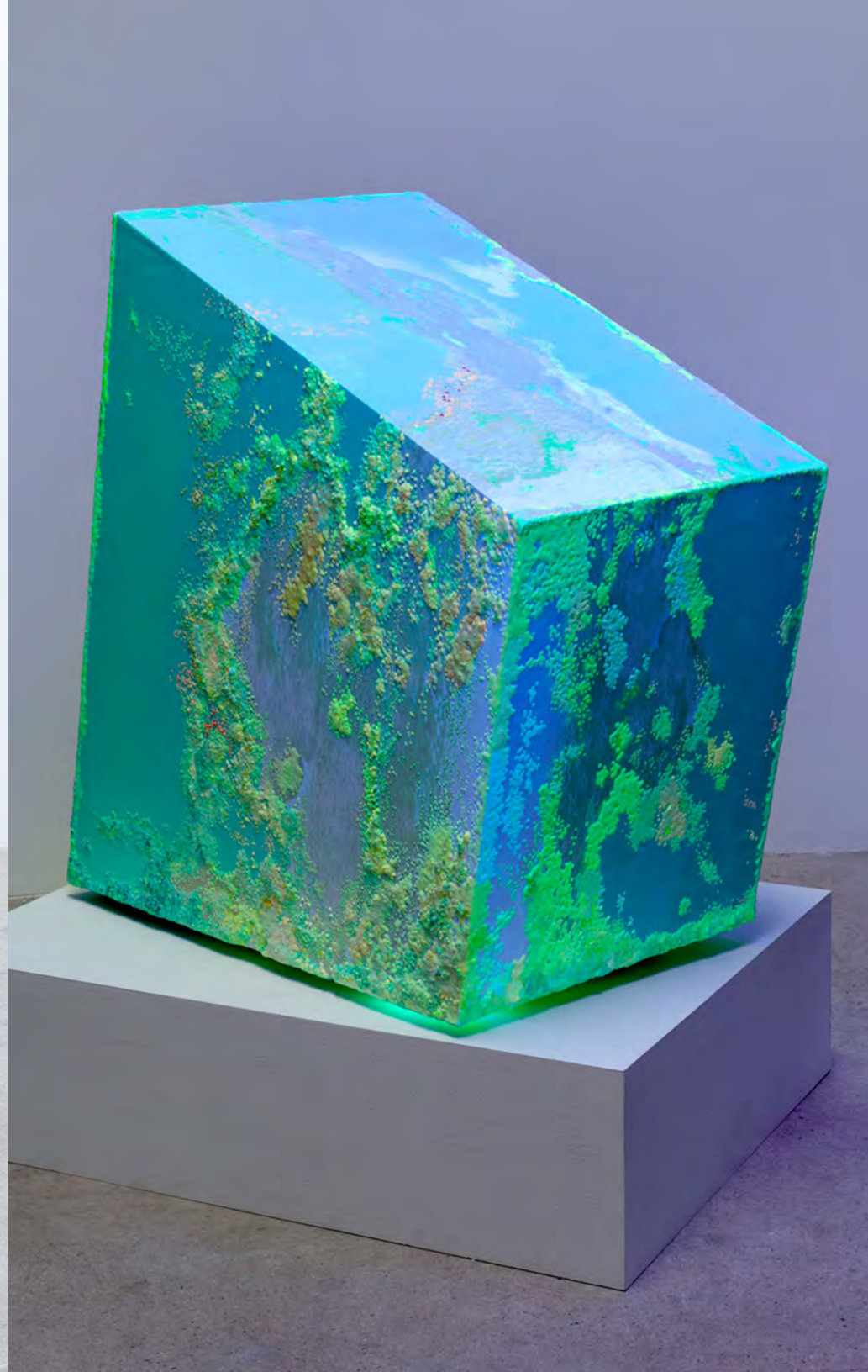




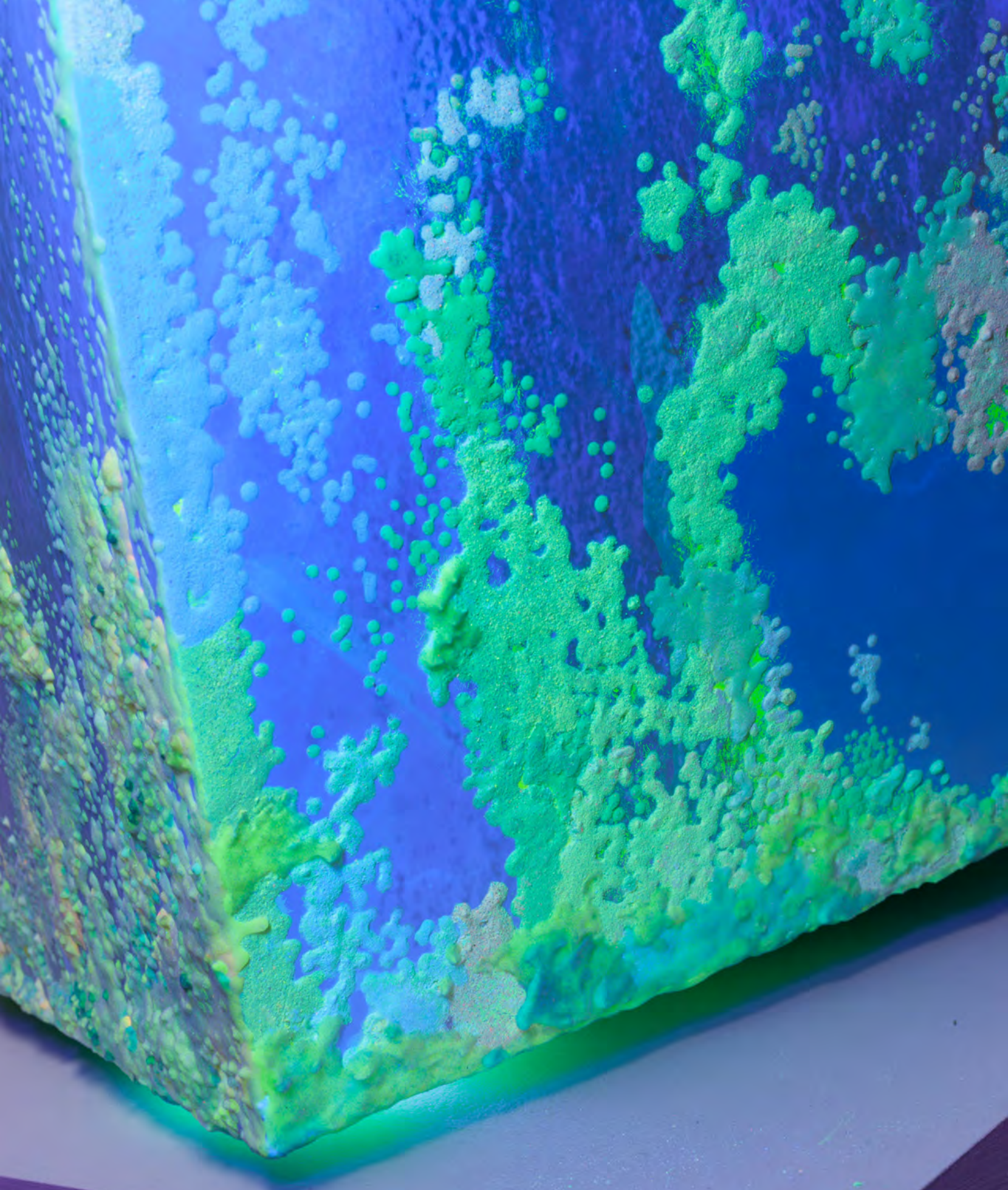
**Lena Daly**

*Battery No. 2*, 2016

uv-reactive chalk on vinyl, uv-reactive oil paint, aluminum  
29 x 28 x 16 in (73.66h x 71.12w x 40.64d cm)







**Lena Daly**  
*Battery no 2, 2016 (detail under UV light)*





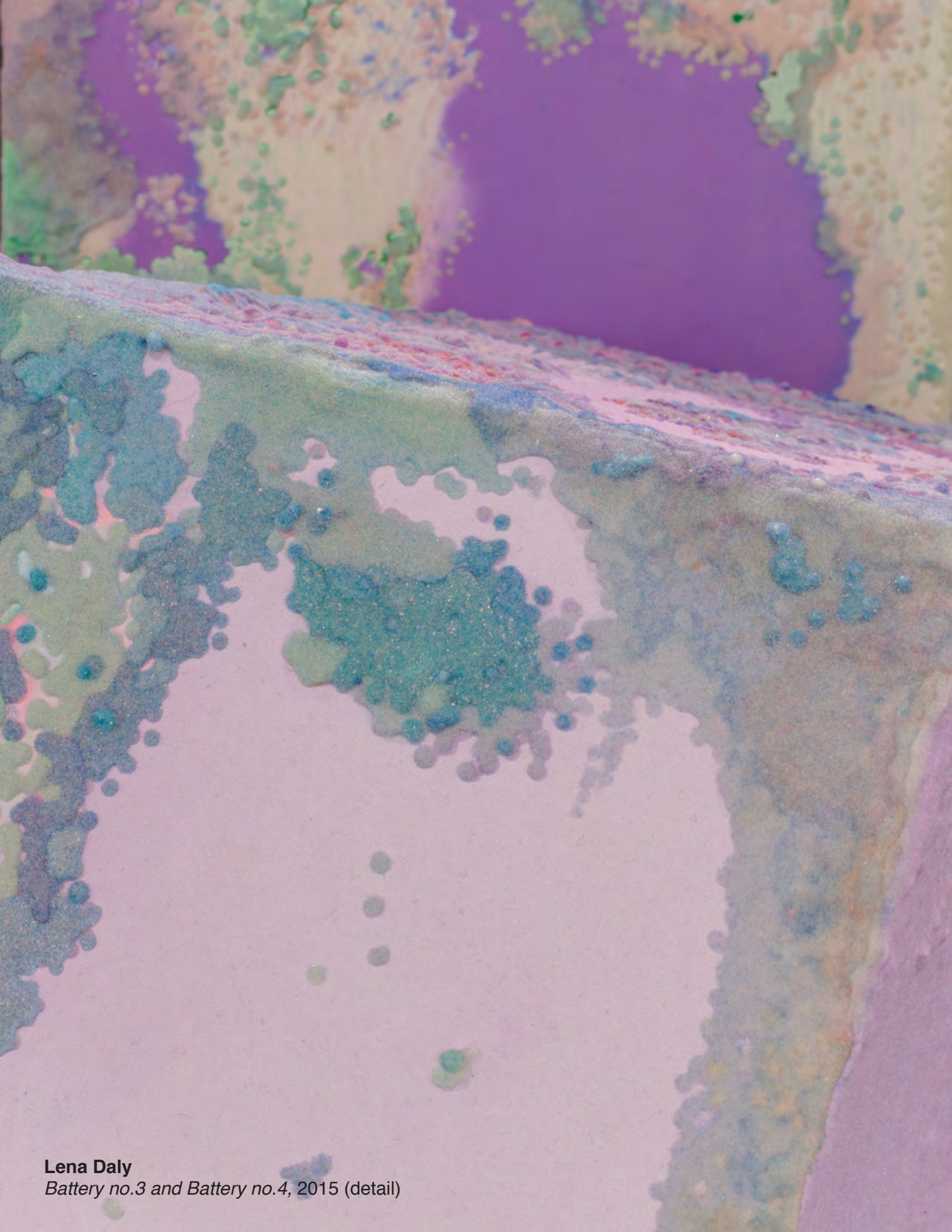
**Lena Daly**  
Installation View, 2015  
Various Small Fires, Los Angeles





**Lena Daly**  
Installation View, 2015  
Various Small Fires, Los Angeles





**Lena Daly**  
*Battery no.3 and Battery no.4, 2015 (detail)*



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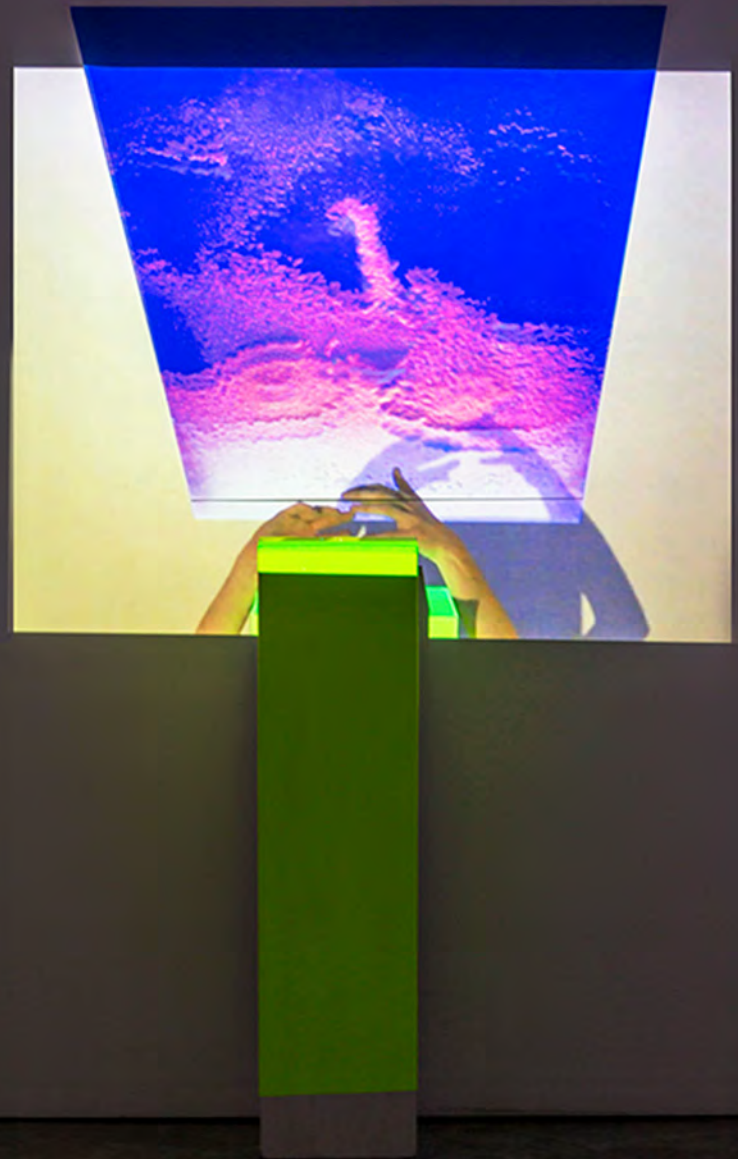
**Lena Daly**

*To Catch a Sound*, 2015

single-channel video

Video: 16 minute loop, Pedestal: 41L x 10.5w x 5.25D in,

Print: 44 x 35 in

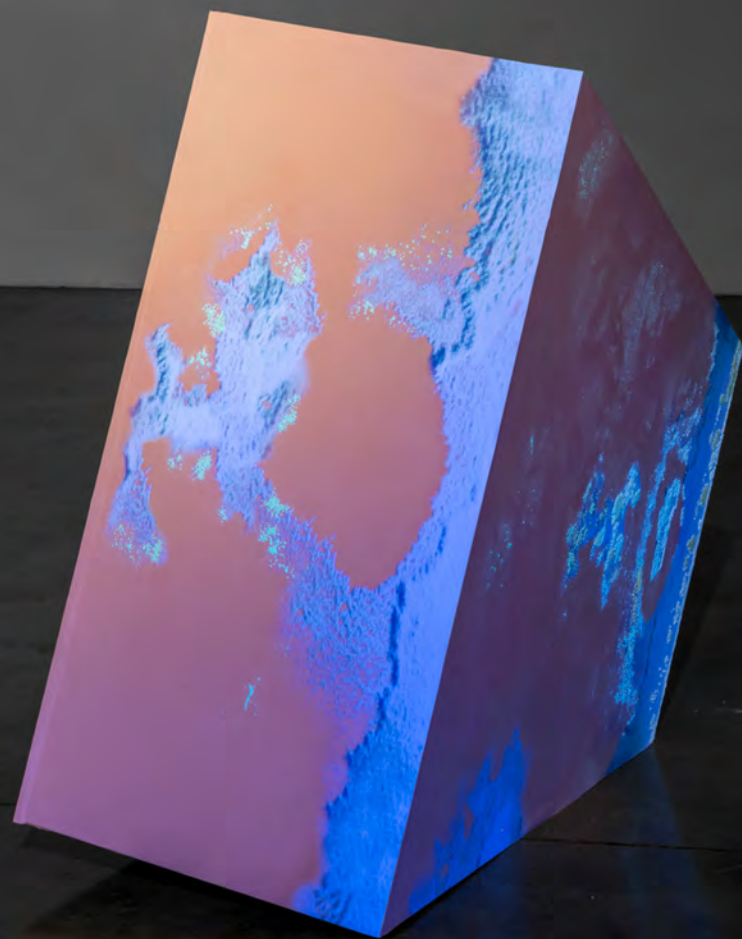


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**Lena Daly**  
*Uneasy Listening*, 2015  
UV-reactive chalk on vinyl inkjet print, wood, UV-light  
32 x 11 x 8 in (each)

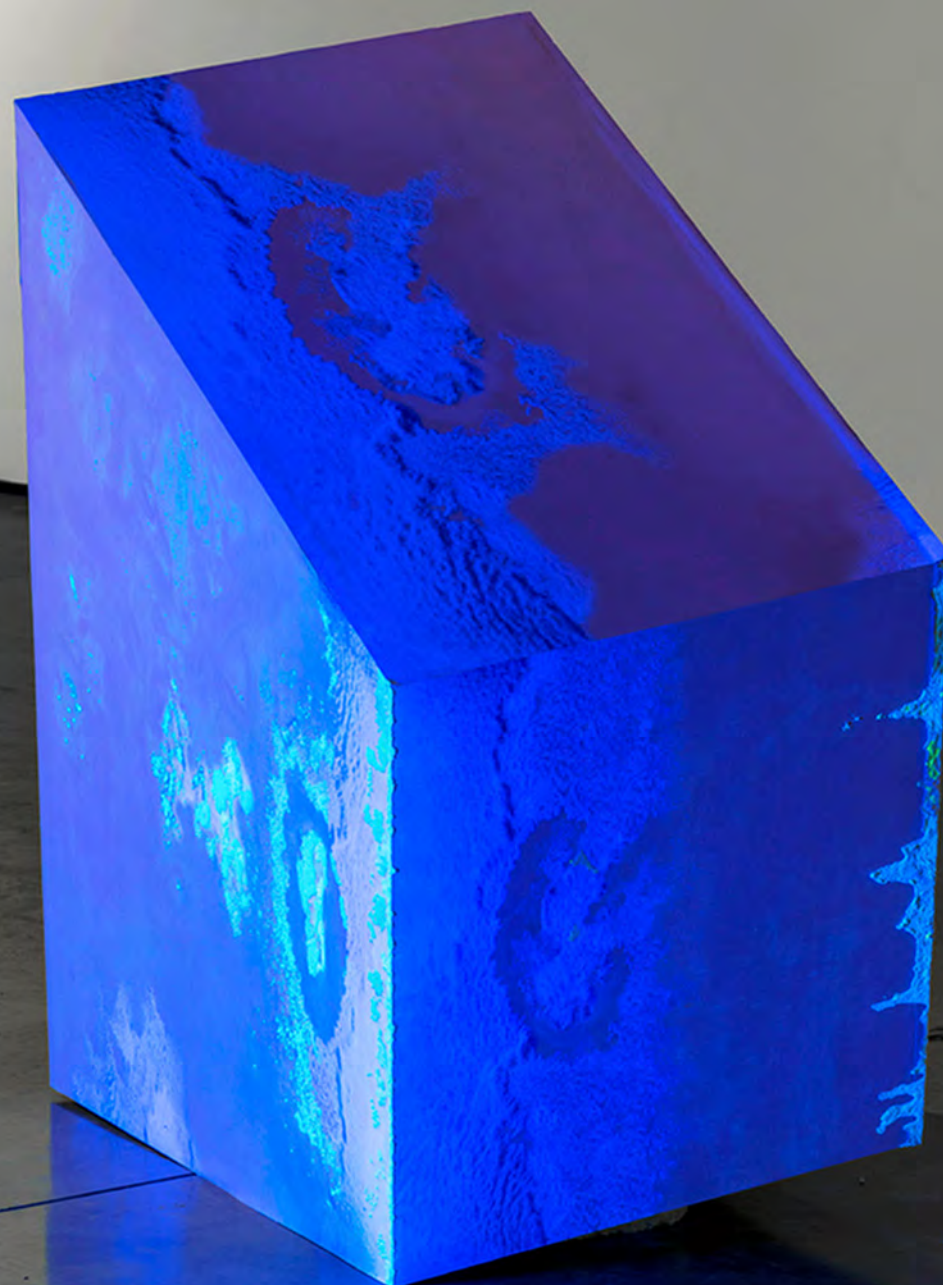




**Lena Daly**

*Battery no. 1*, 2015 (under UV light)

UV-reactive chalk on vinyl inkjet print, wood, LED UV light  
45 x 35 x 22 in (114.3h x 88.9w x 55.88d cm)



# VSF

**Lena Daly**

*The Unsound*, 2015

video projection mapped onto objects, with sound  
from an ultrasound speaker

18 minute 21 second loop

Dimensions variable







**Lena Daly**

*To Catch a Sound*, 2015

single-channel video

Video: 16 minute loop, Pedestal: 41L x 10.5w x 5.25D in,

Print: 44 x 35 in

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**Lena Daly**  
*Uneasy Listening*, 2015  
UV-reactive chalk on vinyl inkjet print, wood, UV-light  
32 x 11 x 8 in (each)



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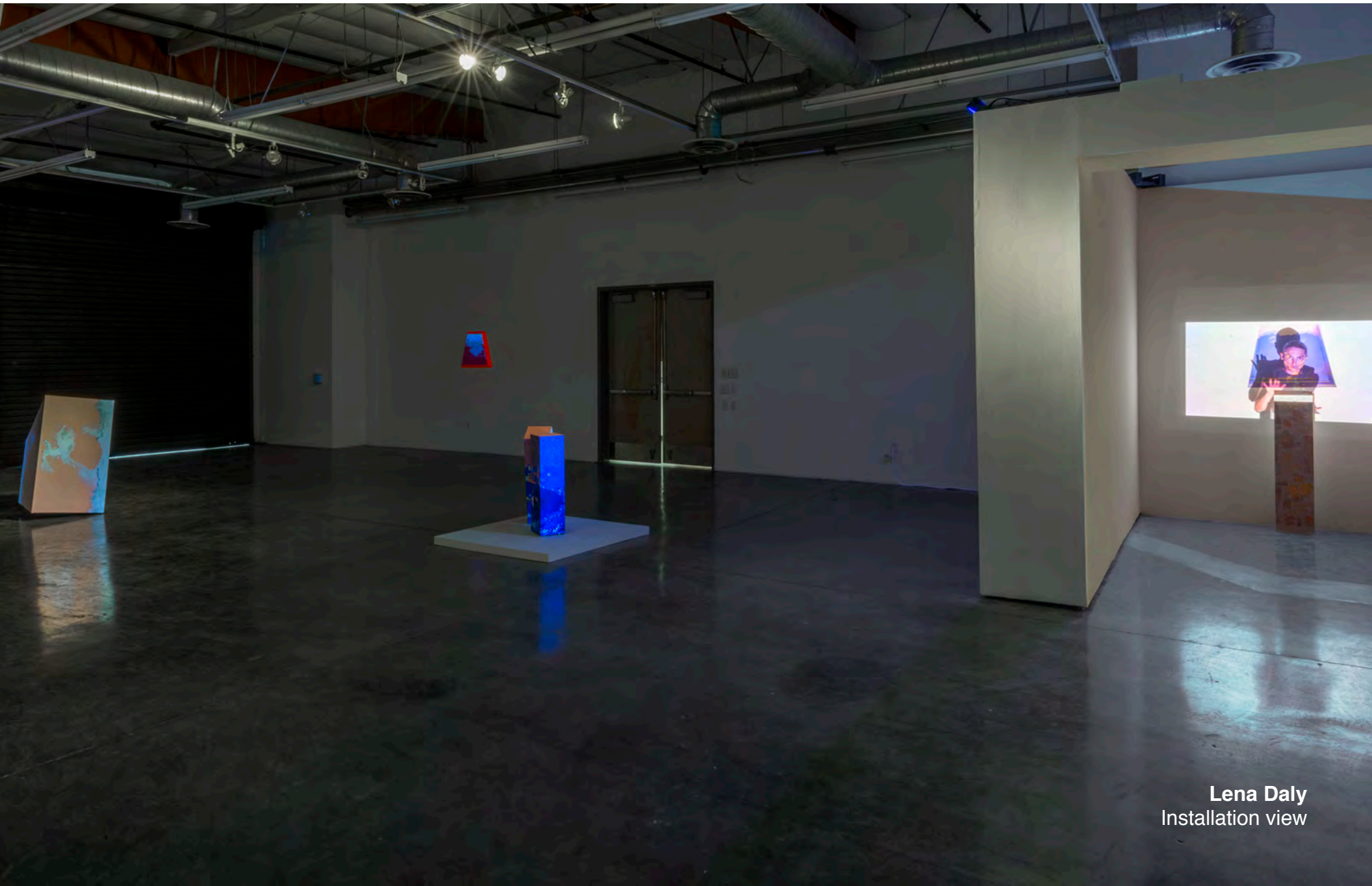
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**Lena Daly**  
Installation view

# VSF

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**Lena Daly**  
Installation view



# VSF

**Lena Daly**

*The Unsound*, 2015

video projection mapped onto objects, with sound  
from an ultrasound speaker

18 minute 21 second loop

Dimensions variable





**Lena Daly**

*The Unsound*, 2015

video projection mapped onto objects, with sound  
from an ultrasound speaker

18 minute 21 second loop

Dimensions variable



**Lena Daly**  
*Trix*, 2016 (still)  
Single-channel video  
5 minutes 14 seconds



**VSF**

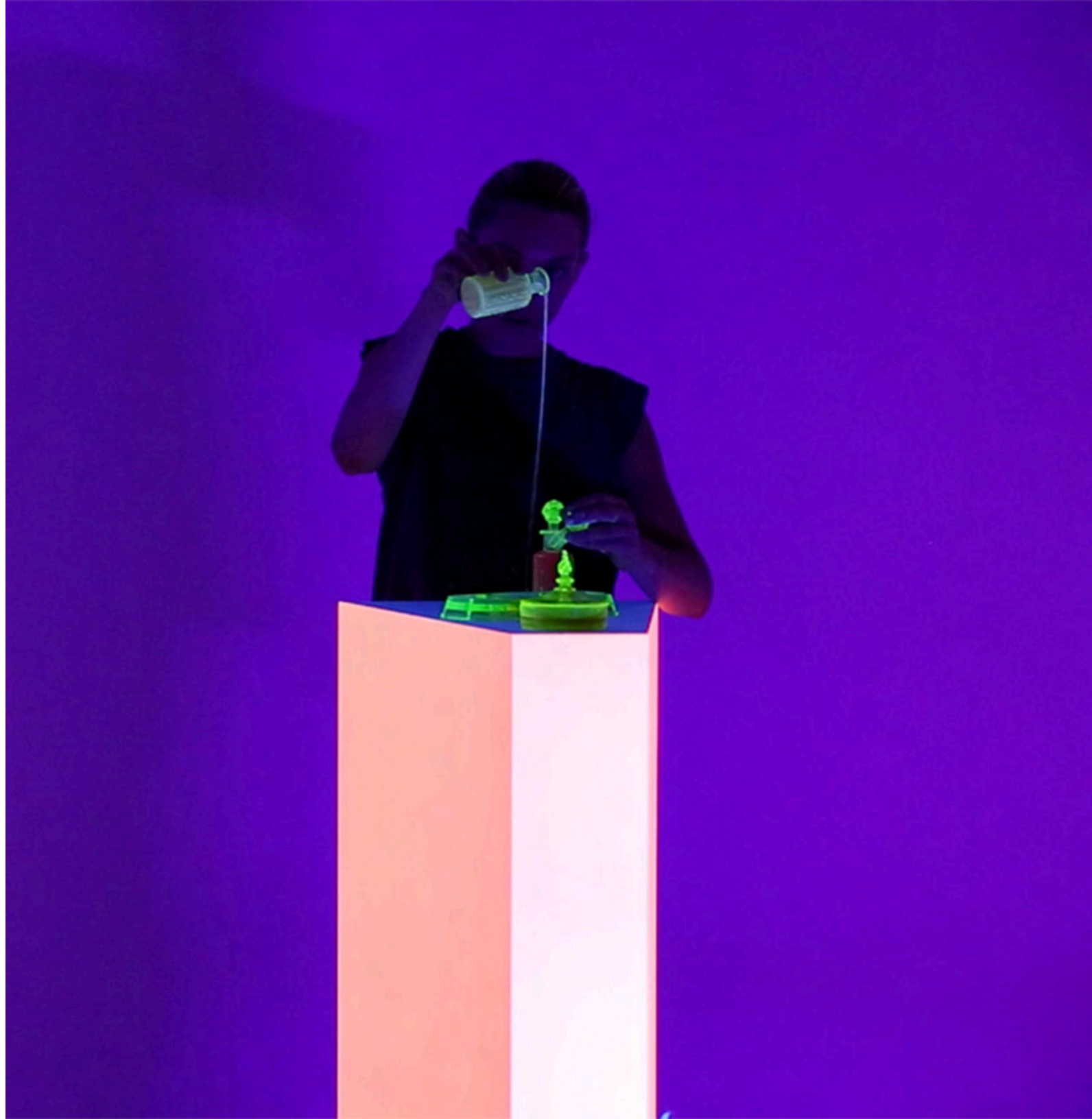
**Lena Daly**

*Trix*, 2016 (still)

5 min 14 seconds

Single-channel video

5 minutes 14 seconds







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**LENA DALY**  
**SELECTED PRESS**

## VARIOUS SMALL FIRES AT DALLAS ART FAIR

For its third year as an exhibitor at the **Dallas Art Fair**, **Various Small Fires** (VSF) gallery's booth, including work by artists like **Lena Daly**, **Mernet Larsen**, **Amir Nikravan**, **Sean Shim-Boyle**, **Amy Yao**, and **Joshua Nathanson**, caught our eye.

**VSF** is a 5,000-square-foot outdoor/indoor complex based in Los Angeles opened in 2012. The gallery is run by **Esther Kim Varet** and was named after **Ed Ruscha's** conceptual art book: *Various Small Fires and Milk* (1964). Born and raised in Dallas, TX, Varet told us it is always a great pleasure to be in town, as the gallery is incredibly supported.

At the entrance of the conceptual, architectural, and interactive art space dedicated to music and art installations, exhibitions, and performances, is a desk that is annually remade by an artist. Varet recently told *W Magazine*, "I wanted the gallery to become a sculptural object," comprised of a large sound corridor, a main exhibition space, as well as a sculpture court promoting emerging American artists.

**DELPHINE DE CAUSANS** | April 15, 2016



**VARIOUS SMALL FIRES AT DALLAS ART FAIR**

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Lena Daly/Unsound Battery, tone no. 2 2016/UV-reactive flock on vinyl, UV-reactive oil paint, wood, LED UV light 28 x 26.5 x 2 inches/Courtesy of Various Small Fires



## 10 Female Artists to See at Dallas Art Fair

**Author: Leah Constantine**

APRIL 13, 2016

The *Dallas Art Fair* is in its eighth edition and once more providing attendees the opportunity to participate in the already expanding arts scene in Dallas, Texas. This year is expected to bring a great collection of international names to our local arts scene, and unite artists from the celebrated to the emerging. For dealers, this means more opportunities to find the next big collection and create a name for themselves by the time they return in 2017. For enthusiasts like myself, this is a chance to get to know current trends in the art world and to see how contemporary artists and gallerists are contributing to those trends worldwide.

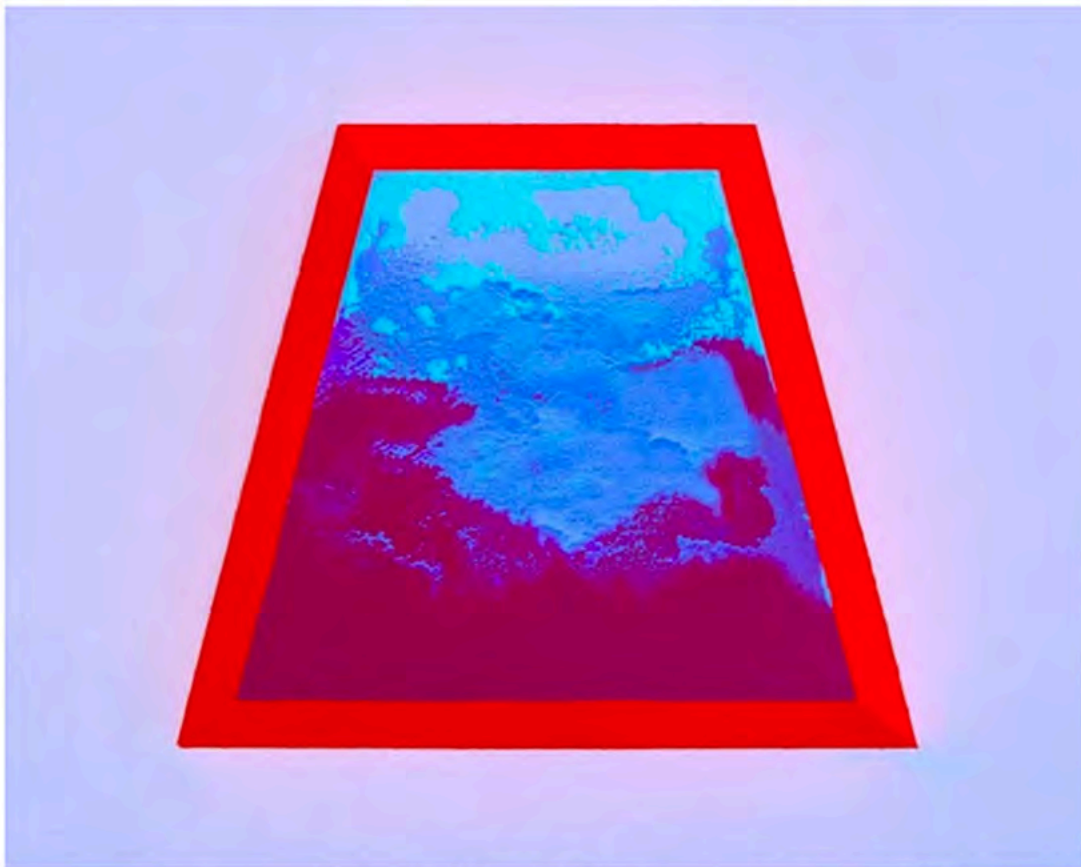
What is great about events as large and as popular as the *Dallas Art Fair* is the ability to explore the diversity of artists and their works. Yet through this diversity, there are opportunities to enhance the voice of female artists that Dallas has not taken proper advantage of. One would assume that in the centuries of art, women would have found a stable environment for representation and appreciation. But where are they now? With groups like the Guerrilla Girls and the *National Museum of Women in the Arts*, misrepresentation of women has been brought to the forefront of art world discussion. Indeed, the issue has been kept alive through retrospectives, auctions, and even critics like Jerry Saltz who recognize this phenomena in contemporary studies. However, the void still exists.

It seems now, more than ever, we are beginning to address the lack of female representation in social and political issues. Despite making up nearly half the population worldwide, we still have to validate our purpose. With an underwhelming amount of art by women at the *Dallas Art Fair*, can we be sure that representation of artists is equal? In order to use my feminist voice as a contribution, this list of 10 must-see female artists allows me the opportunity to give them the representation they deserve.

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## Lena Daly

Daly's sculptures create color-field explorations in sculpture using chalk and LED light that allow the two variables to exist in concert. She is shown by Various Small Fries out of Las Angeles, California.

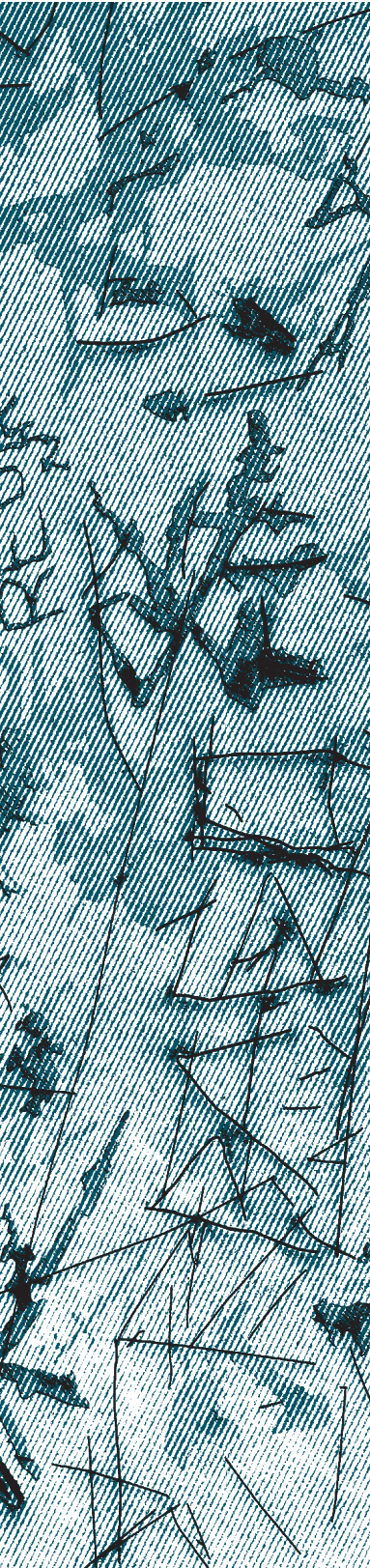


*Re-Charge Battery* UV-reactive chalk on vinyl, uv-reactive oil paint, wood 2015



09 / 24 / 2015

"Fragment - Catalog essay"



# FRAG— MENT

# Pictures, and Other Photographs

**Ryan Linkof**

Assistant Curator  
in Photography, LACMA

**"The camera is an instrument that teaches people  
how to see without a camera." – Dorothea Lange**

∞ In the essay that accompanied the 1977 exhibition *Pictures*, curator Douglas Crimp identified the central preoccupation of a generation of artists who came to be known, through that very exhibition, as the Pictures Generation: "While it once seemed that pictures had the function of interpreting reality, it now seems that they have usurped it."<sup>1</sup> The artists at the center of that show, as well as many of their contemporaries, were fully aware of the power of pictures in structuring everyday life, and they made this the center of their artistic practice. While Crimp used the more general term "pictures" – not directly isolating any particular pictorial mode – it was evident to those at the time, and to those looking back, that photography was central to his art historical interpretation.<sup>2</sup> Crimp's exhibition offered a guide to photography's profound influence on the art of the late 1970s, and set the stage for the medium's rise to preeminence in contemporary art practice.

The decades since that landmark exhibition have witnessed such a radical break from analog processes that "photography" – the quotes are important – is simultaneously everywhere one looks, and nowhere to be found. Many of the presumed certainties about photography have disappeared and transformed before our very eyes, melting into air, only to be reconsolidated in new guises, and with dazzling new applications. The advent and eventual domination of digital image capture, the proliferation of the photographic images on the Internet, and the creation of new kinds of virtual representation and experience have pressed against the very concept of what photography is, where it lives, and what it can be called upon to do.

At the same time, photography arguably has a firmer grip on our collective consciousness than ever before, seeping into our every waking moment – public and private – and affecting how we see, experience, act, and create. It is no longer a revelation to note, as undoubtedly it was when Susan Sontag brilliantly articulated it four decades ago, "Today everything exists to end in a photograph."<sup>3</sup> Weight reformulate her phrase to read something like: today everything is an effect of photography.

This exhibition is focused on the spectral presence of photography in contemporary artistic practice, especially as it emerges among a new generation of Southern California-based artists. There are echoes of the Pictures Generation, conscious or not, in the principles behind the show, and in the work on display. The preoccupations are different, for certain, but the fascination with photography's omnipresence remains. The young artists included here participate in a broader, ongoing discussion about the meaning of photography at the current moment. The exhibition is not, however, a retreat into a narrow examination of photography's ontology, a tendency that has been thoroughly explored in a spate of recent books and exhibitions, including, *The Anxiety of Photography*, *What is a Photograph?*, and most recently, *Light, Paper, Process* at the Getty Museum.<sup>4</sup> Nor is it a rehashing of now-tired claims about the demise of the medium. It turns its view to the horizon – less naval gazing at the photographic medium, than an examination of photography's thrust outward, and its influence on art practice broadly considered.

This exhibition might be seen as a something of an apotheosis of what George Baker, almost exactly



ten years ago now, identified as “Photography’s Expanded Field.”<sup>5</sup> Baker was heavily indebted to Rosalind Krauss, not only for her canonical 1979 essay “Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” but also to her more recent examination of photography as a “theoretical object” in contemporary artistic practice.<sup>6</sup> Krauss identified the ways in which photography was taken up by successive generations of artists during and after the 1960s as a way of examining and critiquing some of the fundamental tenets of art and art history. It was the preeminent medium of the conceptual, and later, postmodern, practice, since it resisted concepts of originality, authorship, stylistic choice, and remained tethered to mass cultural production – all reasons why it appealed so greatly to the Pictures Generation. With the eclipse of those notions as the centerpiece of avant-garde practice, photography saw some of its hegemony wane in the 1990s, only compounded by the rapid ascendancy of digital, which threatened the much discussed “end” of the medium.

It was exactly this perceived obsolescence, however, that Krauss, and through her, Baker, identified the potential of photography – and the photographic object – in artistic theory and practice. The crisis of photography reminds us of the futility – or folly – of clinging to medium specificity, and instead points in the direction of what Krauss called “the necessary plurality of the arts.”<sup>7</sup> Baker turned this into a call to arms, for artists as well as critics and art historians: “we need now to resist the lure of the traditional object and medium in contemporary art.”<sup>8</sup> For Baker, photography served as a model for an “expanded” artistic practice, in its facility at – even dependence on – borrowing from other mediums. While Baker is correct in identifying among some

photographic artists a tendency to incorporate aspects of sculpture, painting, film, or installation, he seems to underestimate the opposite influence: photography’s far reaching influence on other mediums. As many others have contended, photography is a driving force in contemporary art.<sup>9</sup>

The works that comprise this exhibition trace the contours of photography’s expanded field, providing something of a map of photography’s outward momentum. The curators of the show have selected works that explore what remains of photography, and how those remains continue to influence advanced artistic thinking, even for those artists who have no use for a camera. If what remains is only a “theoretical object,” to borrow Krauss’s phrase, then this collection of work offers an anatomy of that object. The works offer insight into photography as a system of belief, and as a locus of knowledge. Photography is evident in fact – there are photographic works included – but what is on display is less the physical than the conceptual remains of the medium. If photography is an increasingly elusive and slippery artistic medium, then what remains are its structuring principles, and its underlying logic. What were once characteristics wedded to the photographic image – the index; the two dimensional window into a three-dimensional world; the freezing of time; the use of light as the medium of expression; even the chemical emulsion – can no longer be bracketed off as distinctly photographic. These features are all shared traits in a broader, expanded field of creative practice.

At its core, photography’s great promise has long been that of providing a trace, or an impression of the physical world. This indexical promise is explored in Lena Daly’s incandescent black light sculptures, which bear the traces of sound waves

1. Douglas Crimp, *Pictures: An Exhibition of Work of Troy Brauntuch, Jack Goldstein, Sherrie Levine, Robert Longo, Philip Smith* (New York: Artists Space, 1977), 3.
2. See Douglas Eklund, *The Pictures Generation, 1974-1984* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2009).
3. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1977), 24.
4. Matthew Thompson, *The Anxiety of Photography* (Aspen, CO: Aspen Art Press, 2011); Carol Squiers, *What is a Photograph?* (New York: DelMonico Books, 2013); Virginia Heckert, *Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2015). See also Abigail Solomon-Godeau, “Photography after Art Photography,” in Brian Wallis, ed. *Art after Modernism: Rethinking Representation* (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984).
5. George Baker, “Photography’s Expanded Field,” *October* 114 (Fall 2005) pp.120-140
6. Rosalind Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field” in *Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other WModernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985); Rosalind Krauss, “Reinventing the Medium,” *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 25, no. 2 (Winter 1999): 289-305.
7. Krauss, “Reinventing the Medium,” 305.
8. Baker, “Photography’s Expanded Field,” 138.
9. See in particular, Charlotte Cotton, *The Photograph as Contemporary Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004).

etched by UV-reactive chalk on stereo speakers in a literal rendering of the process of mechanized “recording” of wavelengths. Brody Albert’s *La Estrella*, with its digital recreation of “communally created drawing” on the table of a Los Angeles taco shop, similarly physicalizes this act of marking a surface – a sculptural updating of the “the pencil of nature.” Tanya Brodsky’s cylindrical *Pillar*, produced from a cast of a simple, utilitarian object is, in the artist’s words, “a kind of negative, formed through touch rather than optics” – a sculptural mold that “carries with it the aura of authenticity associated with the photographic negative.” The translucent turquoise resin, illuminated from within, renders pictorial and visually rich what is, at its core, a process of direct and literal recording a physical object in the world.

The struggle of reducing three dimensions into a two-dimensional plane is not unique to photography, but the photograph’s insistent flatness – its lack of facture and relief – makes the issue of depth and representational illusion a crucial one in the history of the medium. Megan Mueller’s wall-mounted assemblage sculptures activate visual perception in a way that is rooted in what she identifies as the “merging of two dimensional and three dimensional planes.” The photographic camouflage patterns give the simultaneous impression of a space beyond the picture plane, only to be overlaid with material that arrests and obstructs visual penetration. Audrey Hope’s lumpy, photo-based, fabric-and-wood sculptures similarly play with surface and depth, illusionism and abstraction. The works offer both a flat surface posing as a recessed space (in the photographs pasted to the surface), and a textured dimensional surface that is insistently opaque (the matte, spray painted cloth that covers the object). Julian Rogers’s tinted, photorealistic still lifes, which are viewed from above so as to flatten out the representational space, create a mesmerizing tension between the saturated, textured surface pigment and the highly detailed objects that lie beyond.

Photography’s freezing of time – arresting the relentless pace of lived experience – is explored in several video works in the exhibition. Matt Savitsky’s *Life Under Glass* – the title itself suggestive of a world stilled beneath a plane of glass, prey to inspection by a lens – activates the tension between motion and stasis. The two subjects of the piece vacillate between dynamic action and complete stillness, as if orchestrating and then dismantling

a series of stagey, photographic tableaux. Jacinto Astiazarán, in a less dramaturgical vein, equally engages with the photographic composition through the moving image, framing a series of seascapes of the Port of Los Angeles, its hulking ships at such a remove as to appear immobile. The young boy sprawled across the floor at the center of Erick Msumanje’s *In the Night* is all but frozen, seemingly locked in place, with only his shifting left arm providing evidence of movement and life.

The frame is a central problematic in photographic theory, one bound up with the notion of how photographers select and interpret the world, given a seemingly limitless number of potential subjects. In this vein, Mueller’s wall sculptures, bound by bungee cords and strips of tarpaulin, seem to be an attempt to bind and trap the work of art, as if it were threatening to escape from the prison of the frame. Similarly, Christina Mesiti’s intricate sculptural labyrinth dissolves the solid edge of the framed work of art, creating a porous wall of ventilation blocks that, in the words of the artist, “separates and interpenetrates inside and outside.”

Mesiti’s sculpture also plays with the idea of the camera as a tool for representation. As she has indicated, “the sculpture acts as a camera,” capturing and tracing light, if not freezing it in light sensitive chemicals, then producing an ephemeral effect of light and shadow – an expression of sculptural and architectural space. The piece seems to wrest away the most elemental feature of photography: “drawing with light.”

Much of this work relates to photography only on a conceptual level, and does not make extensive use of photographic materials in its construction. A select number of the artists, however, use photographic materials in bold and innovative ways, some focusing on the inherent qualities of the process itself, others using it as a pathway to explore other mediums. Andrew K. Thompson’s *Penetrating the Veil #131* is part of a series of works in which he manipulates the emulsion and dye layers of chromogenic photographic paper, exposing it to chemicals that leech the bright colors from the surface, creating dense, painterly, abstract tableaux. Arden Surdam’s “lensless food images,” offer another mode of playing with photographic process and chemical structure – produced by coating food items in photographic chemicals and overlaying them on the photographic paper. Valerie Veator’s luscious pigment prints on silk, the dyes



bleeding into the fabric, seem to entirely flatten the distinction between photography and painting. And Hannah Karsen's elegant photograph of a flower vase similarly plays with painterly composition and surface quality: the photographic image is mounted to maple, creating a lush texture.

These works express a fascination with a vanishing medium, a tendency that is in no way unique to photography. Something similar is evident in Lyndsay Bloom's hypnotic film *KUKA*, shot on 16mm, processed by hand, and transferred to HD. The abrasions on the emulsion layer act as a scrim, serving as a reminder of the analog origins of the film. The footage, which tracks the movements of a robotic manufacturing device and ends with a close-up on the inscribed logo "robotic solutions," offers a meditation – in form and content – on the interaction of the mechanized and the handmade.

The main direction that much of this work expands – if we are tracing the expansion of the photographic "field" – is toward other forms of art practice. This is tricky with photography, since it is not, of course, solely an artistic medium. The fascination with photography among the Pictures Generation was with its commercial forms, which undergirded the appropriation ethos of Richard Prince, Sherrie Levine and others. Some of this spirit is alive and well, if fully updated and reinvigorated, in the work of Laura Schawelka, whose montage portraits – with names taken from pinup models whose publicity photos appear in the image – offer a simultaneous celebration and critique of the glossy, polished aesthetics of the mass culture of sex and commerce. Regina Rode's sculptural installation, which includes appropriated photographic imagery, offers a critique of the political valences and underlying rhetoric of primitizing representations of the non-Western world.

Photography as it was once understood has, in many ways, evaporated and transformed into the very air we breathe. Just as we cannot escape its omnipresence, this exhibition reminds us that no artistic medium can escape the presence of photography. It is only appropriate that photography might serve as the theoretical underpinning of a selection of work that is wildly diverse in its methods and execution. Photography has long been the most promiscuous of mediums, weaving its way into all facets

of our lives and guiding much of how we communicate. Neither entirely an artistic medium, a commercial form, a scientific tool, nor a tool for communication – it is a visual mode that can be everywhere without even being seen.

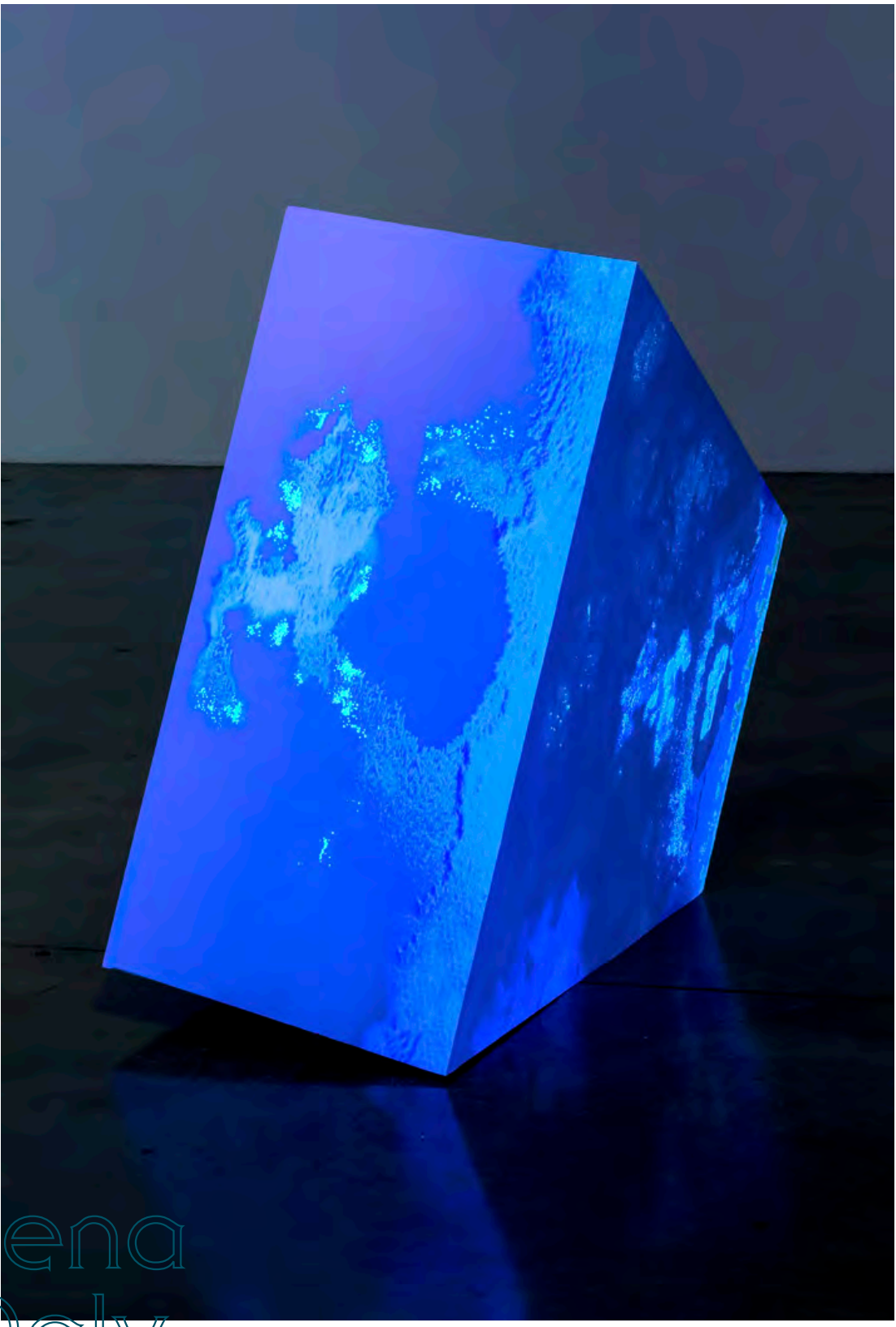
In his examination of photography's expanded field, Baker notes, "something like a photographic effect still remains – survives, perhaps, in a new, altered form...the photographic object has been 'reconstructed' in contemporary artistic practice."<sup>10</sup> While some might contend – justifiably – that the photographic object has never disappeared and never needed to be reconstructed, it is undeniable that photography now makes itself felt in areas where a generation ago it might have seemed unfathomable. This exhibition is testament enough to that. As the work of these artists illustrates, photography's field has undoubtedly expanded. +

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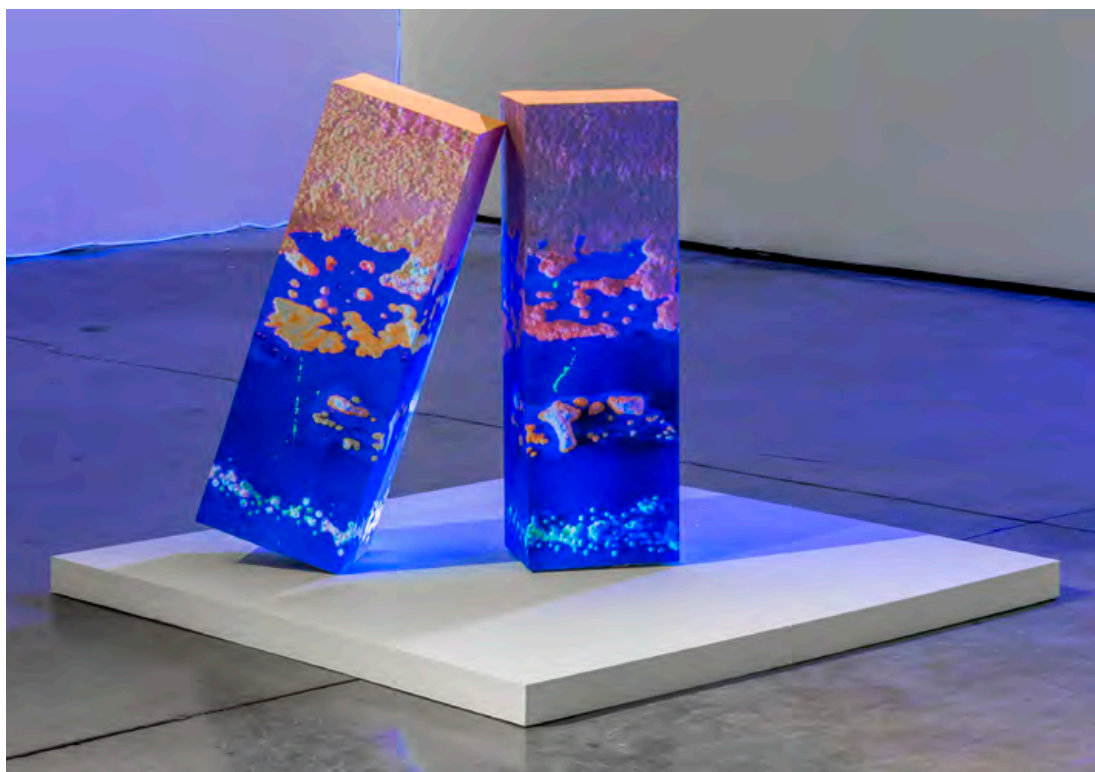
RYAN LINKOF is assistant curator in the Wallis Annenberg Photography Department at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), where he has worked since receiving his PhD from the University of Southern California in 2011. He has organized many exhibitions at LACMA, including the forthcoming *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Medium*. His writing has appeared in many journals and exhibition catalogues, and his book *Public Images* will be released by Bloomsbury Publishing in 2016.

10. Baker, "Photography's Expanded Field," 123.

*Battery III, 2015 / Vinyl inkjet print, uv-light reactive chalk, MDF / 45" x 35" x 22"*







Over the past two years I have been hearing a set of images knowing that I could or would cross into the layer that is visible only through the lens or the similar reach of the eye of the photograph's view. Too much assumed. The images are not flat slices of photographed space, but expanded translations of an image as sound and sound as an object.

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September 24 - October 8, 2015  
Reception: Thursday, September 24

### **Gallery Hours:**

Mon - Fri  
9:00 am - 4:30 pm

### **New Wight Gallery**

1100 Broad Art Center  
240 Charles E Young Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90095

T: 310.825.0557

### **University of California, Los Angeles**

Department of Art  
art.ucla.edu

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10 / 5 / 2009

"Justin Beal, Lena Daly, Kate Owens"

*Welcome to the debut of Art Practical!*

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## 2 / Nomads and Residents

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### **Justin Beal, Lena Daly, Kate Owens**

GROUP SHOW

OCT 15 - NOV 07

JANCAR JONES GALLERY

*by Carol Anne McChrystal*

If you were to make a Venn diagram of ready-mades, minimalist sculpture, color field painting *and* their opposites, the handful of works that occupy the tiny Jancar Jones Gallery this month would reside at its center. Though there are only four pieces in the exhibition, each describes and opens up the relationships between material strategy and meaning.

Materiality is at the forefront as Justin Beal, Kate Owens, and Lena Daly sidestep aura and mysticism in favor of clear formal relationships between manufactured objects. It's no secret how any of these works were made. Though the creative processes are completely transparent, and each of the four pieces takes its material components at face value, the stories of their productions don't limit these works.

A certain economy between material and meaning emerges. There is very little on view, but what exists to examine is packed with potential. The logic permeating the works that make up this tiny, forceful exhibition is an ever-present symbiotic codependency. The interaction between the materials of each individual work, in combination with the careful juxtaposition within the installation, create a tenuous balance, in which each object is itself and its photographic negative at the same time. “What do you want?” they seem to ask. “Vibrant color? Sleek, liquid shine? Luxurious volume?” “Why settle?” these artists suggest. One can have it all, even an idea and its opposite.



Justin Beal, Lena Daly, Kate Owens; installation view, 2009; Jancar Jones Gallery, San Francisco.

Lena Daly's *Sculpture Ballet* (2009) is a balancing act in contrasting two flat panels. One, a photograph depicting rumpled, but luxurious silken purple fabric, hangs flat against the wall. The other, a Plexiglas panel painted as a Rotho-like, pastel color field, leans quietly beneath on the floor. Daly constructs a dynamic relationship that considers and conflates the following variables in each element simultaneously: image,



object, flatness, and volume. In this forced relationship, a bulky weight can be flat and, conversely, a flat field can be voluminous.



Kate Owens. *Affair at Styles* (purple & yellow), and *Affair at Styles* (pink & blue), both 2008; cotton, soft drink. Courtesy of Jancar Jones, San Francisco.



Justin Beal. Untitled, 2009; aluminum, mirror, clear tubing, stretch-wrap, 28 x 18 in. Courtesy of Jancar Jones, San Francisco.



By the same token, a confident tension emerges between product and source in both of Kate Owens's *Affair at Styles* (*pink & blue*) and (*blue & yellow*) (both 2008). Owens spawns hippy-dippy tie-dye tees from toxic-grape soft drinks, the absolute in chemical flavor and artificial color. She asks one to reconsider established associations and alterity between these objects as natural or artificial, and blurs automatic or conditioned realities in the fabric of shirt-stuffed plastic bottles. Here, her shirts at once act as beautiful abstract color fields and as signifiers of the peace-and-love generation. But Owens clearly demonstrates that these are easily extracted and infused signifiers. After all, the shirts are not dyed with organic fruit-based pigments, but with high fructose corn syrup and Red Number 40. At first, Los Angeles-based artist Justin Beal may appear to be a dissonant inclusion, as clear or colorless items comprise his wall piece. It soon becomes apparent, however, that Beal negotiates a similarly stark abundance of material relationships. Beal's concern for surface yields an oddly invisible hardware store sculpture that is bulky, heavy, and totally, but not quite, here. Manufacturer's product specifications printed along clear tubing—in combination with seeing one's reflection examining the work—foregrounds the fact that at the end of the day, this is an elegantly tangled length of clear plastic tubing bound to a mirrored glass pane with clear cling wrap.

At Jancar Jones, Daly, Owens, and Beal share a matter-of-fact engagement with the texture of the built world. But what really unifies this curatorial endeavor is that each artist occupies a potent space where material exercise teeters on the brink of an infrastructural aesthetic.[1] This is to say that while these projects don't quite step out of the realm of object-oriented art, they are curious about what lies at the heart of the structures that govern how we see, understand, and perceive.

[1] Kissane, Sean. "This is Not How Things Really Seem to You" from *Alan Phelan: Fragile Absolutes*. Dublin: Irish Museum of Modern Art, 2009.