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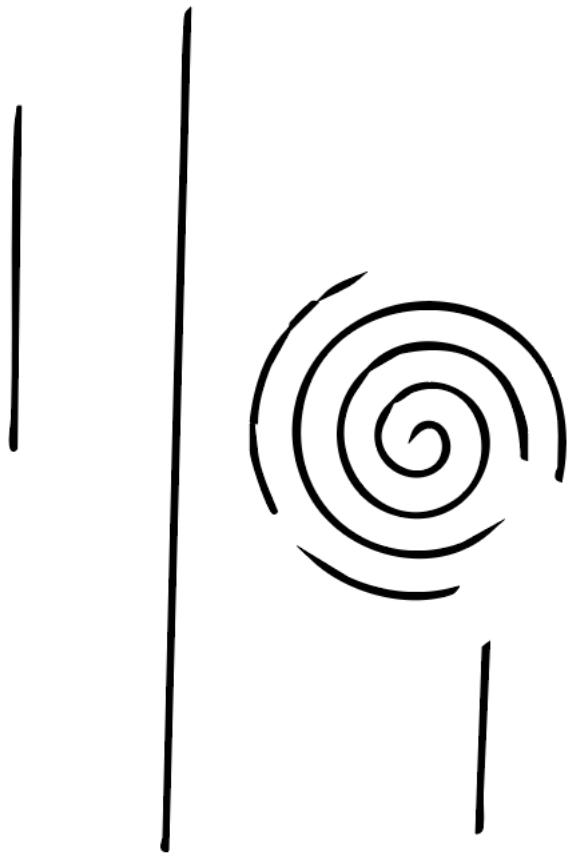
1500 S Western Ave #407
Chicago, IL 60608

Thomas Huston
God, Time, and Causality
Oct. 17 – Dec. 12, 2026



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Thomas Huston (b. 1991) is an artist and writer living and working in Chicago, IL. Through his practice and exhibitions he has worked with artists including Yani Aviles, Shir Ende, Noel Madison Fetting-Smith, J. Michael Ford, Joseph Grigely, Max Guy, Cathy Hsiao, Jennifer Chen-Su Huang, Arnold Kemp, Gary LaPointe Jr., Frances Lee, Kelly Lloyd, Devin T. Mays, Matt Morris, Risa Recio, Edra Soto, Derrick Woods-Morrow, and Ang Ziqi Zhang, among many others. He currently works as an art handler at the Art Institute of Chicago, and holds an MFA in Printmedia and an MA in Visual and Critical Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His mother is a priest and his father is an ecologist.

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God, Time, and Causality includes 5 drawings, 2 sculptures, 2 gestures, and 1 video.

The drawings reflect the instability of images, materially and as representation. Permanent marker on mylar, the drawings are registration templates used in the conservation of photographs to make accurate measurements of color over time. The drawings have an indexical relationship to their corresponding photographs, tracing their contours, marking their boundaries, while simultaneously abstracting them. Numbered, die-cut holes puncture their surfaces, allowing the spectrophotometer to reach the photo's surface.

Originally made by conservators, and then re-made by Huston, these drawings have an incidental, subjective quality which elides singular authorship. Some are highly detailed, tracing the contours of their subjects, while others are minimal, giving just enough information to be accurately aligned. The titles reflect their corresponding photographs, as well as the names of the conservators who made the original templates. Each is matted and framed to the standards of an institutional photography collection.

The sculptures are maquettes, stand-ins for absent objects. When the Modern Wing of the Art Institute was first installed, full scale maquettes of the museum's three major Brancusi sculptures and their bases were fabricated out of pale blue insulation styrofoam insulation board. These were then used to determine the artworks' placement on a large platform while minimizing unnecessary handling of the fragile objects. Huston has reimagined these maquettes through a photograph showing two identical pedestals (one which now belongs to Chicago's Golden Bird), taken by Brancusi in his studio. The same photo was used as the cover to the pamphlet accompanying Scott Burton's 1989 Artist's Choice exhibition at MoMA, "Burton on Brancusi." The second maquette sculpture reproduces Gerrit Rietveld's 1934 side table, designed as part of his larger crate furniture project. The pedestals and table for which the maquettes stand-in are themselves supporting structures, something to put something on.

The ongoing and repeated re-configuration of the gallery space which is central to its function is made visible through the unpatched holes from two previous exhibitions in the space. Whereas the white cube is typically repainted carefully to render it in a continual present-tense, these residues remind us of its constant turnover and the maintenance of both the ideas, temporalities, and materialities of art. Fresh flowers in a small vessel, replenished weekly, bring life into the space, and with it, ephemerality. A different register of time.

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In the video, Elvis Presely performs the final song of the final show of his final tour: "Can't help falling in love." Before he has even completed the first line of the song, he takes the pale blue scarf from around his neck and tosses it into the audience with a flick of his wrists. Within moments a stagehand has placed another, identical pale blue scarf around his neck. Elvis quickly tosses it off into the audience. This goes on as he sings, until at last he tosses the last scarf off and exits the stage. With this relic-making, Elvis's imminent death hangs heavy over the video and in the exhibition it serves as a kind of emotional foil to the drawings and sculptures. The blue of the scarves recalls the blue of the maquettes, while also evoking Felix Gonzalez-Torres's favored blue. Wise men say…

hope, in the face of inevitable decay, disappearance, of mitigating that change, prolonging meaning, while accepting its ephemerality. knowledge (of death) and wonder (at life), simultaneously. connection of meaning with loss, change. "fugitive" materials are the ones that must be cared for most actively, constantly.

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2026

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Colorimetry Template for Sonia Landy Sheridan (American, 1925–2021), Flowers, Lab 212S (Rose I), 1976, Inkjet print, 27.9 × 21.7 cm (11 × 8 9/16 in.), Purchased with funds provided by the Society for Contemporary Art, 1979.460, first drawn by Paulina Miasik in 2024, 2026

Permanent marker on polyester 4 mil drafting film
14 7/8 x 18 7/8 in. in. framed

MHPH_TH_005

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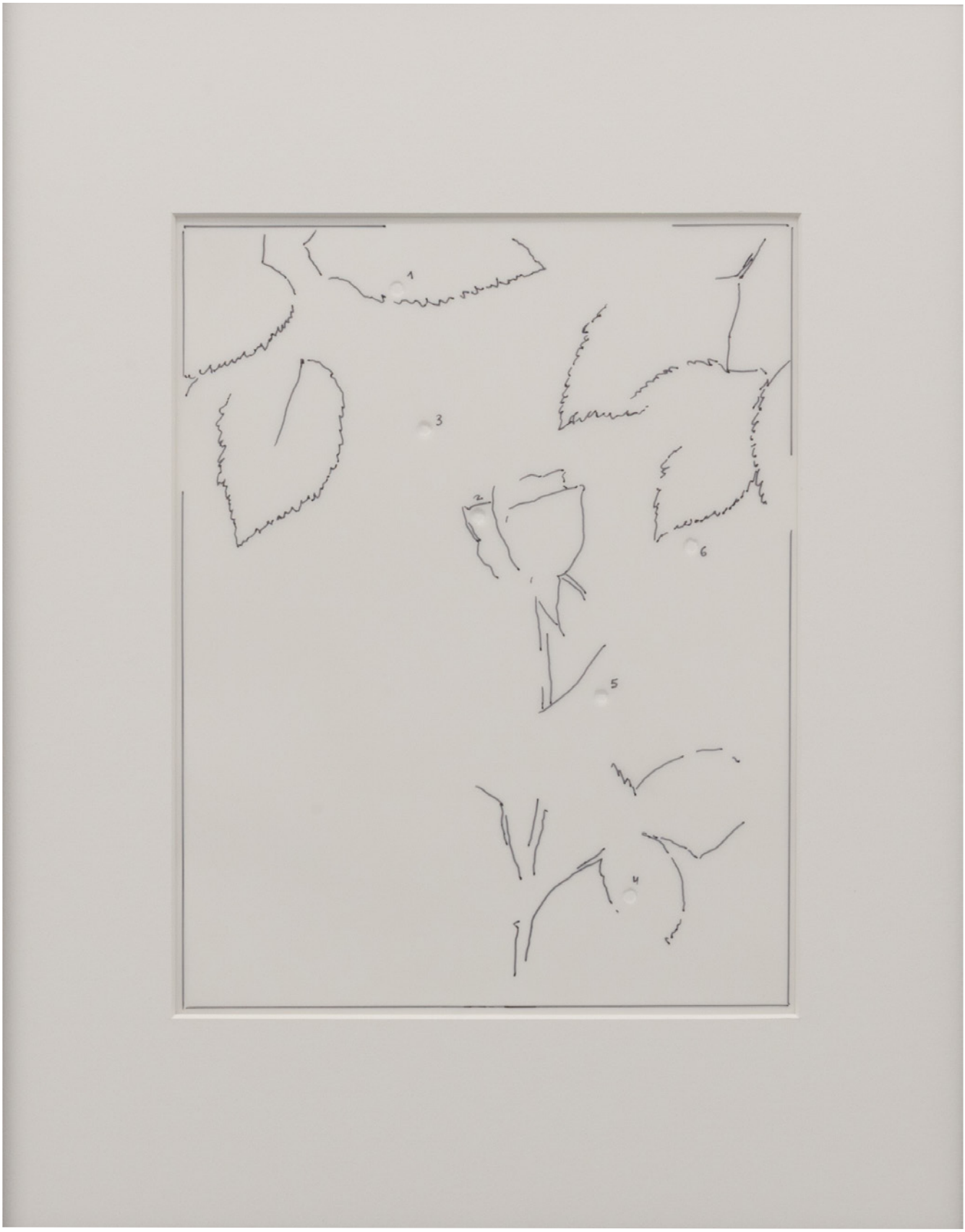

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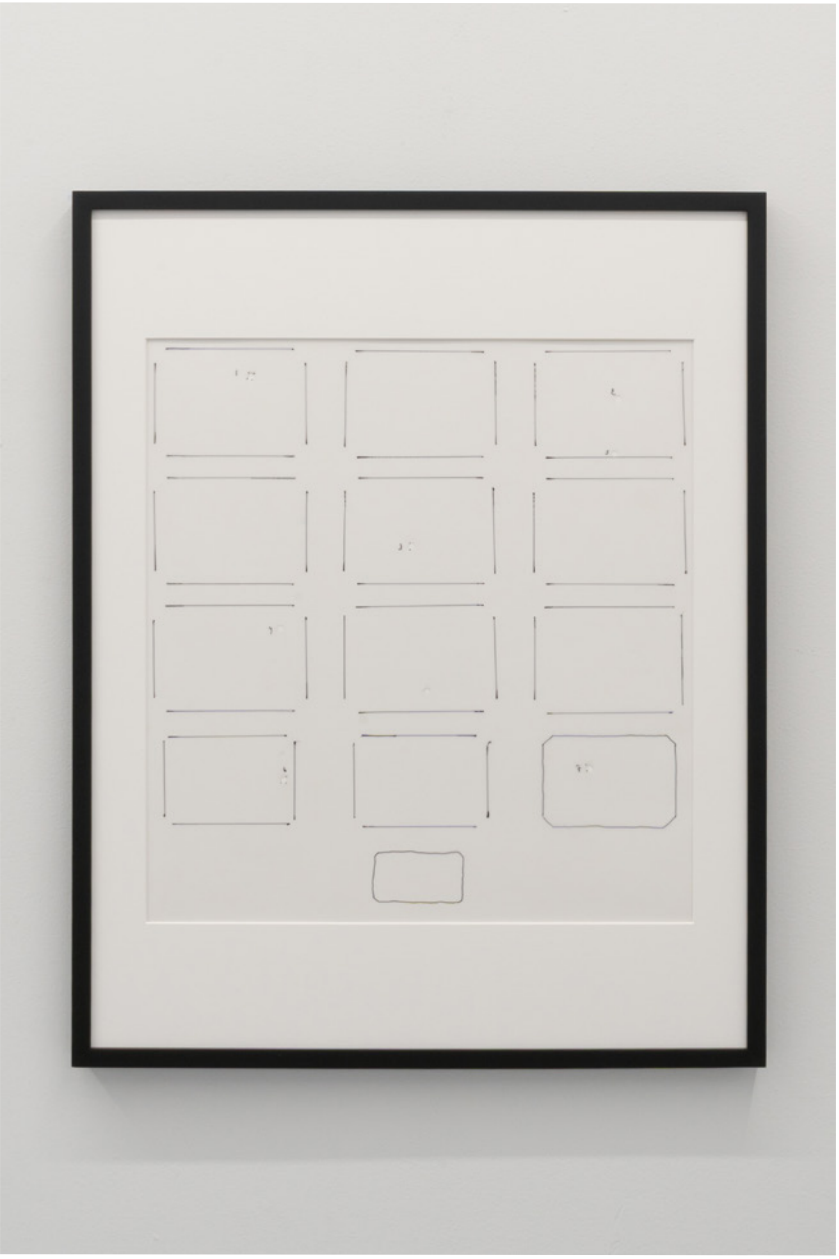

Colorimetry Template for Marcel Broodthaers (Belgian, 1924–1976), Daguerre Soup (La Soupe de Daguerre), 1975, Chromogenic color prints (12) and silk-screens (2), from the portfolio "Artists & Photographs" (1975), Each image/paper: 7.9 × 11.7 cm (3 1/8 × 4 5/8 in.); 52.2 × 51.3 cm (20 9/16 × 20 1/4 in.); Overall: 53.4 × 52.1 cm (21 × 20 1/2 in.), Gift of David C. and Sarajean Ruttenberg, 1991.1144, first drawn by Sylvie Penichon in 2020, 2026

Permanent marker on polyester 4 mil drafting film
22 ⅞ × 28 ⅞ in. framed

MHPH_TH_006

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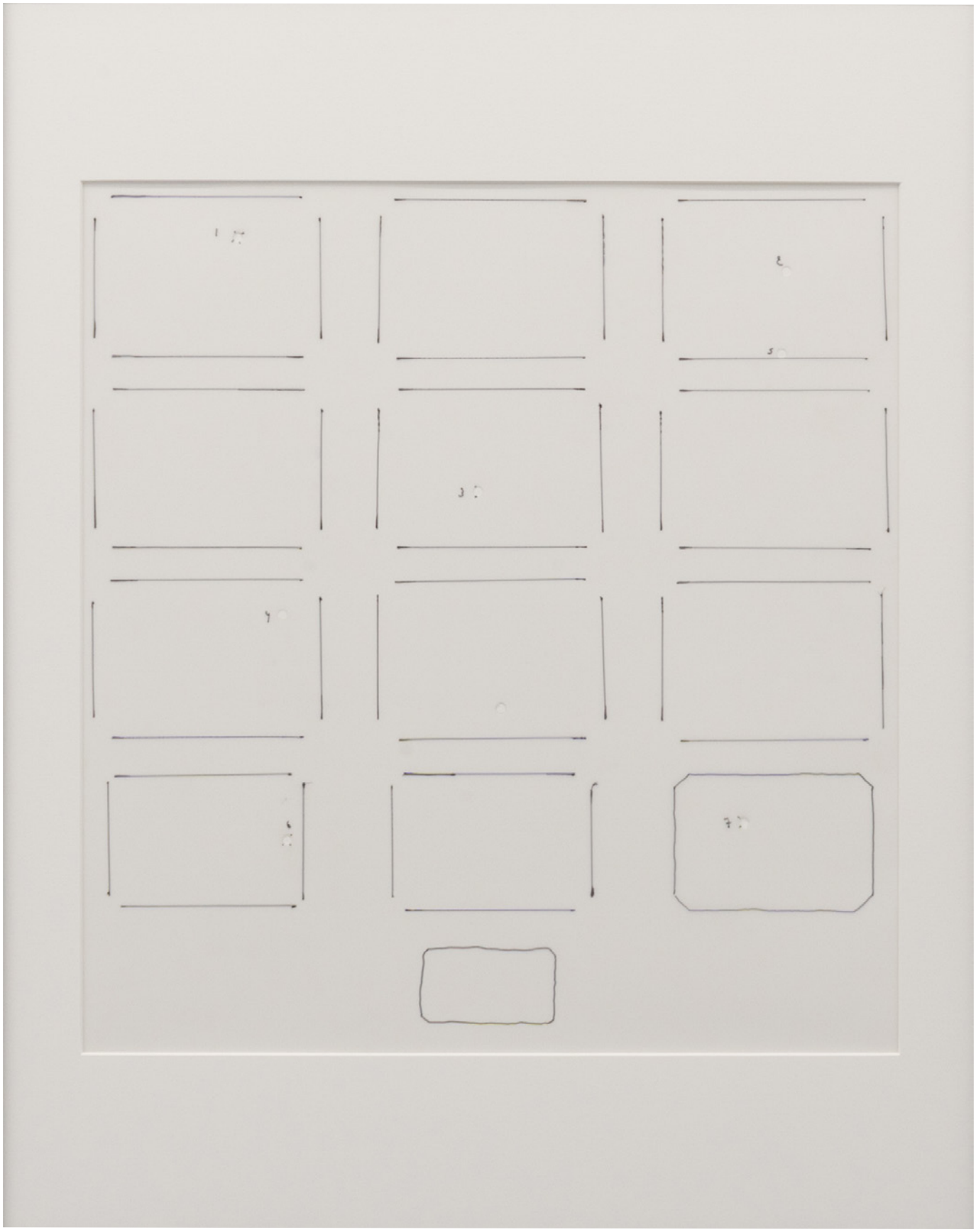

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I can't help falling in love with you, n.d.

Found video
3:48 minutes
ed. 1/3

MHPH_TH_007

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Colorimetry Template for Paul Outerbridge, Jr. (American, 1896–1958), Marmon Crankshaft, 1923, Platinum print, Image/paper: 11.8 × 9.2 cm (4 11/16 × 3 5/8 in.); Mount: 35.6 × 28 cm (14 1/16 × 11 1/16 in.), Julien Levy Collection, Gift of Jean and Julien Levy, 1975.1144, first drawn by Sylvie Penichon in 1999, 2023

Permanent marker on polyester 4 mil drafting film
14 ⅞ × 18 ⅞ in. framed

MHPH_TH_008

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2026

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Paired maquette for Brancusi pedestals, 2026

Styrofoam insulation board
12 × 37 ¼ × 12 in, each

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Colorimetry Template for John Divola (American, born 1949), Zuma #24, 1977, printed 1977–79, Chromogenic print, Image: 24.7 × 30.6 cm (9 3/4 × 12 1/16 in.); Paper: 27.9 × 35.5 cm (11 × 14 in.), Gift of Nancy and Mitchell Steir, 2015.696, first drawn by Emily Mercer in 2025, 2026

Permanent marker on polyester 4 mil drafting film
22 ⅞ × 18 ⅞ in. framed

MHPH_TH_010

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Colorimetry Template for Cindy Sherman (American, born 1954), Untitled #86, 1981, Chromogenic print, 61 × 122 cm (24 × 48 in.), Gift of Edlis Neeson Collection, 2015.154, 3 of 10, plus 2 artist's proofs, first drawn by Sylvie Penichon in 2021, 2026

Permanent marker on polyester 4 mil drafting film, in two parts
36 ⅞ × 60 ⅞ in. framed

MHPH_TH_011

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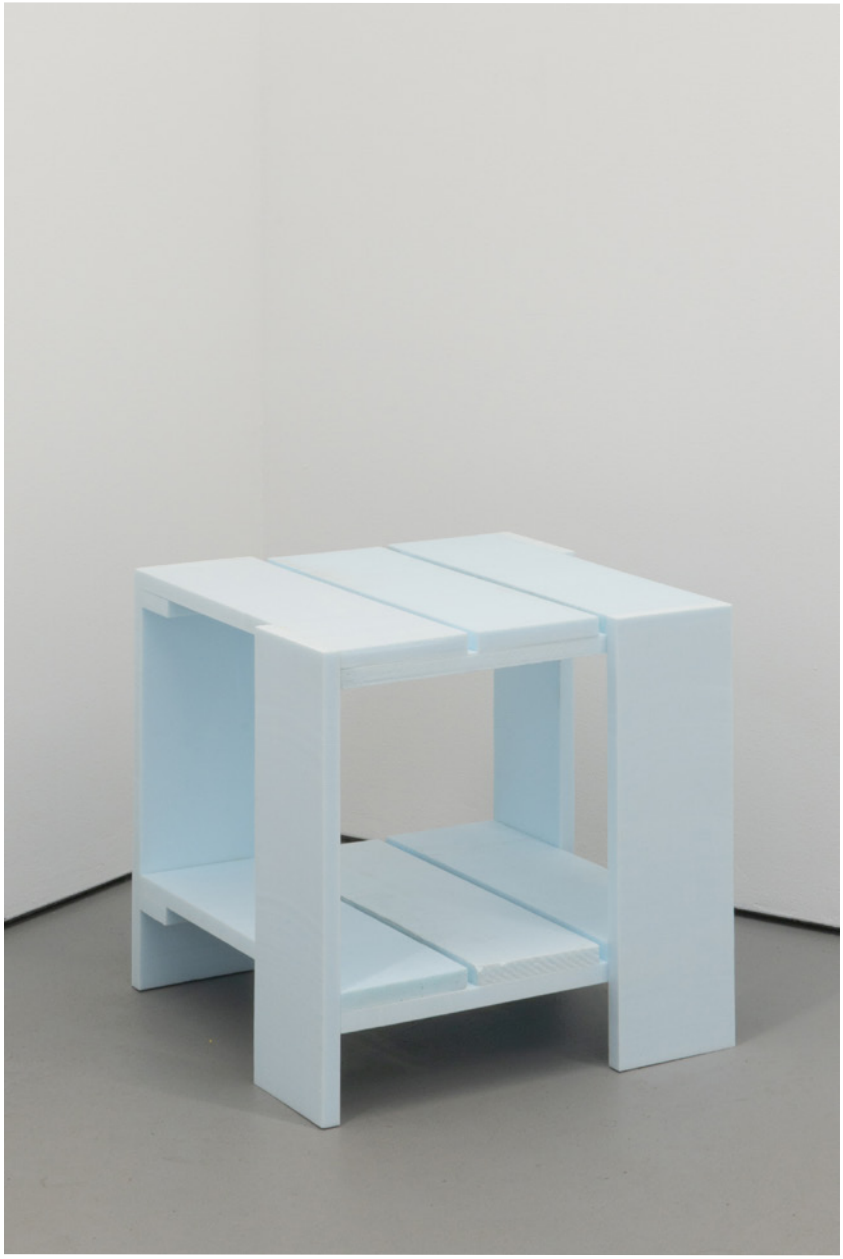

Maquette for Rietveld crate table, 2026

Styrofoam insulation board
18 3/4 x 19 1/4 x 19 1/4 in.

MHPH_TH_012

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Arrangement (for mhph), 2026

Unpatched holes from previous exhibitions (Tim Mann's Mr. Peanut, April 11, 2026–June 06, 2026 and Danny Bredar's Demand and Supply, August 01, 2026–September 26, 2026)

No fixed dimensions

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Muse, 2026

Fresh flowers in bud vase, replaced weekly

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