

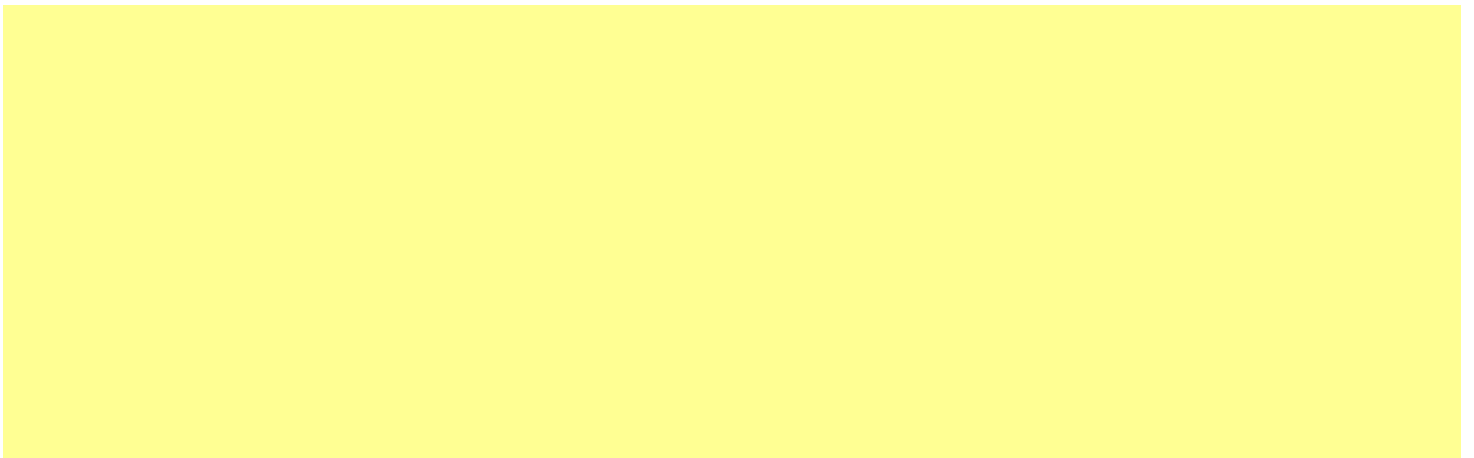


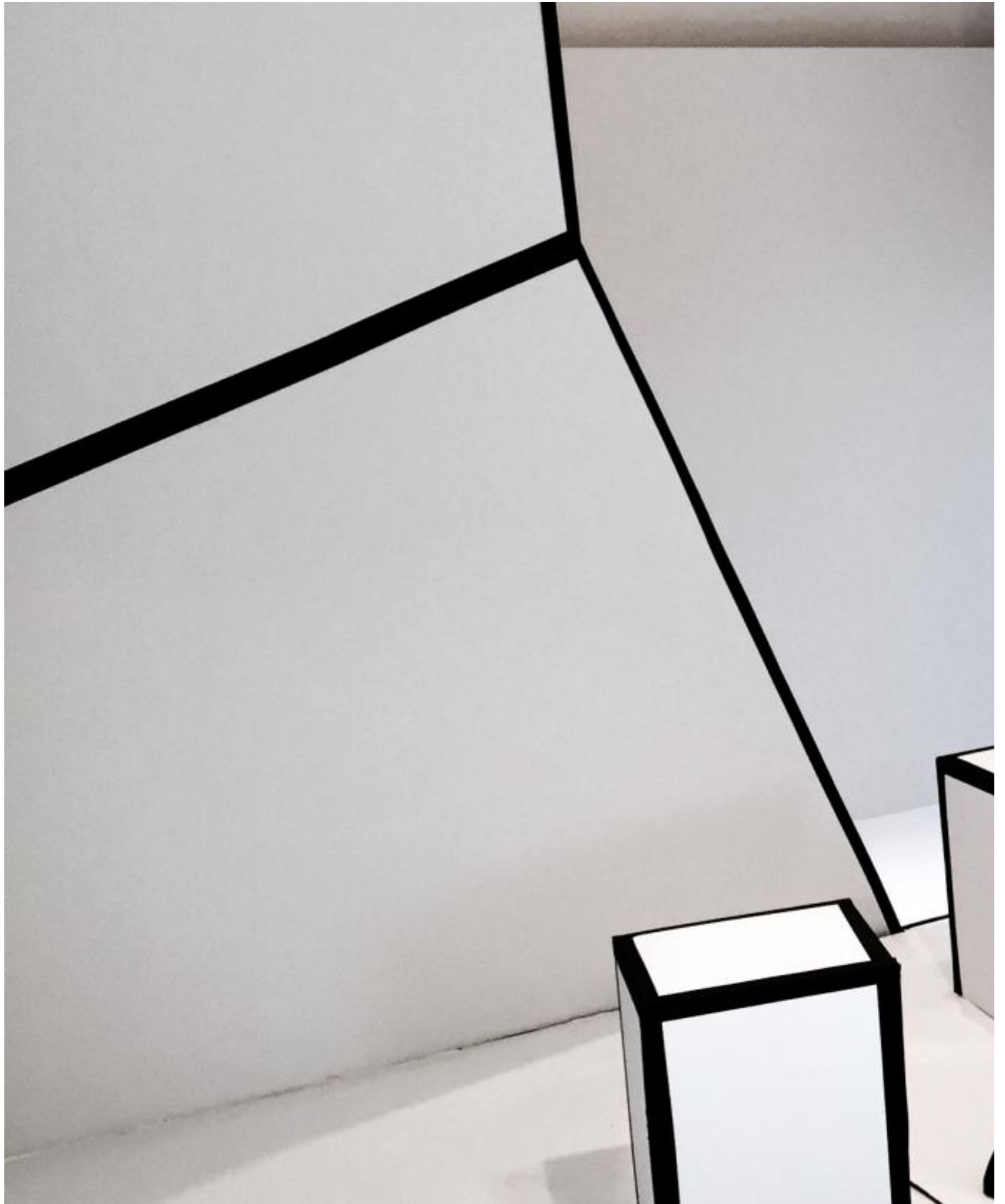
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Room 1





Pil and Galia Kollektiv, *Progress Report from the Strategic Sanctuary for the Destruction of Free Will*, 2016, installation view. Courtesy the artist and Pump House Gallery. Photo: Eoin Carey

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"Why don't we do a little exercise... Would anyone like to put themselves forward?"
--Masked voice from the performance in *Second Annual Report from the Strategic Sanctuary for the Destruction of Free Will* (2018)

In writing about architecture, Le Corbusier observed how things, over time, melt into primary shapes. Like Grecian ruins, great things become reduced to simple, formal arrangements: "I think that the flatness of the horizon, particularly at noon when it imposes a uniformity on everything about it, provides for each one of us a measure of the most humanly possible perception of the absolute". An investigation into how we perceive the world around us, particularly the power structures that bind us, is the starting point for Pil and Galia Kollektiv's *Second Annual Report from the Strategic Sanctuary for the Destruction of the Free Will*. In this site-specific installation by the London-based duo we experience an ineffable, white, total world where self-expression is in tension with overarching regulating systems.

In *Strategic Sanctuary* we encounter a white, horizonless space. Clues to where we are, and what era we are in, provide both comfort and unnerving possibility. A ready-made cardboard Bauhaus room might be a prison cell, monk's sanctuary, or padded therapy room. The uniform skin of whiteness is cut by swaths of black tape. Long, black lines describe wall hinges and life-sized triangles. They restrain form but also entice us toward ungraspable horizons. The title of the installation is derived from a pamphlet from the 1950s entitled *SYNANON: STRATEGIC SANCTUARIES FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF FREE WILL* written against Synanon, an offshoot AA cult whose mandate was to get people to stop drinking by using LSD instead. The space itself seems to make a parallel between the mechanisms of state control and regulation on the one hand, and the idea of self-expression and spiritual release, on the other. An audio soundtrack based on a Youtube group therapy session plays eerily in the background. We anticipate de-tox, absolution, or full ecstatic ritual.

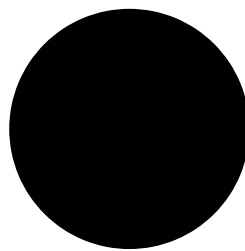
Is chaos still chaos if we find ways to contain it? We may stand for or against the monitoring of our well-being and suitability for work, normalcy, and complicity with the whole. but we can't help but notice how freely we express ourselves when

mean the more, but we can't keep our noses from seeing, no expression can ever be
masked. Or how we fall into the surreal gestures and choreology of cult rapture,
metal band performances, and group therapy confession. In *Strategic Sanctuary* we
are asked to let go and empathise. Placed under such voluntary house-arrest, the
excessive generation of subjectivity (aka sharing) feels like the high of
psychedelic drugs, the collective fire of shared justice, and the levelling
fervour-to-belong that can bring us, willfully, to the point of worship, making us
question the way such experiences are constructed.

- Text by Alisha Piercy

Pil and Galia Kollektiv are artists, writers and curators working in
collaboration. Their work addresses the legacy of modernism and the relationship
between art and politics. Their band WE extends their interrogation of the
construction of individuality and collectivity. They have had solo shows at
Naughton Gallery, Belfast, Pump House Gallery, London, Te Tuhi Center for the
Arts, New Zealand and The Showroom Gallery, London. They have also presented live
work at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, the 5th Montreal Biennial and Kunsthall
Oslo. They are the directors of artist run project space xero, kline & coma and
work as lecturers in Fine Art at the University of Reading, the Royal College of
Art and the CASS School of Art.

*The artists would like to thank Victor M. Jakeman, Rosie Ridgway, University of
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Dominique Pétrin.*



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