



Keke Vilabelda
Brand New Ruins

When in 2008 the so-called Great Recession violently hit the majority of the developed countries around the globe, many of them witnessed their housing-bubble bursting and adding more fuel to an economic crisis that was already critical. Seven years later the worst has passed but, among other changes, we have been left with a different panorama, with abandoned building complexes as a background. Keke Vilabelda tackles this issue directing his longtime interest in architecture and urban landscape to it, focusing his research on the Spanish territory, although the message is sent worldwide.

During a road trip around the country the artist visited a few out of hundreds of places where the traces of such a reckless endeavor lay forgotten. He wandered through these ruins without a past, searching for the beauty in their premature decline, paying attention to the textures of their concrete surface, the fortuitous, sometimes playful compositions created by the cavities within these skeletons of stone. It is a different kind of beauty than the one they were meant to have, no polished finishes or dazzling looks; instead, there is an aura of despair almost visible on the raw walls, the fossilized hopes and dreams of all the people who mortgaged their lives for a new home. A deep sense of failure is also present, that of the numerous companies who collapsed due to their selfish eagerness for building, leading4 themselves to bankruptcy, the buildings to ruins, and millions to deprivation.

Vilabelda tried to transfer these sensations to the gallery space by creating his works out of the same material used in the construction of those buildings, mainly cement, iron and asphalt. The result is a sort of radiographies of this unfinished architecture that not only communicate at a visual level, but also open up a pathway for deeper reflection. For this last purpose, the artist incorporates in some of the pieces, neon-like straight lines that add an artificial and fictitious quality to the image. Neon colors are used in advertisement to captivate, to sell a double reality, hiding the harsh part behind the lights.



These acid tones help the works to obtain a more appealing and attractive look, maybe even enhance the composition, but the aim of the artist, far from making them pleasant, is to highlight the contrast between the new and the decay, to arouse questions, to generate an internal debate between different ideas and different languages.

The whole technical process in Vilabelda's practice is always linked to architecture itself. For this very project, analogies with the construction procedure and with the notion of wreck in particular, become not only mechanic but go deeper to a nearly conceptual level. The photograph functions here as an archival document, which ages during the process. After being adhered to the cement surface, it needs to be dug up by scraping off manually the thin film of paper that covers it, similar to the unveiling of fossils in an archaeological site. This, together with the imperfections of the concrete layer, gives these brand new works a dilapidated look, just like "his" ruins. The physical effort undertaken by the artist remains engraved on the surface of the work, recalling and making the hardship, still being experienced in many homes, present in the exhibition space. By carrying out the painting stage right at the end, on top of the damaged exterior, Vilabelda emphasizes the powerful contrast between what we see and what something really is, dressing up the truth in bright colours.

Things happen fast in our time, as a consumer society we rapidly buy, spend, waste and demand more. Now we find ourselves living among our own refuse, among contemporary ruins.







Retaining Wall

from Brand New Ruins
series, 2015

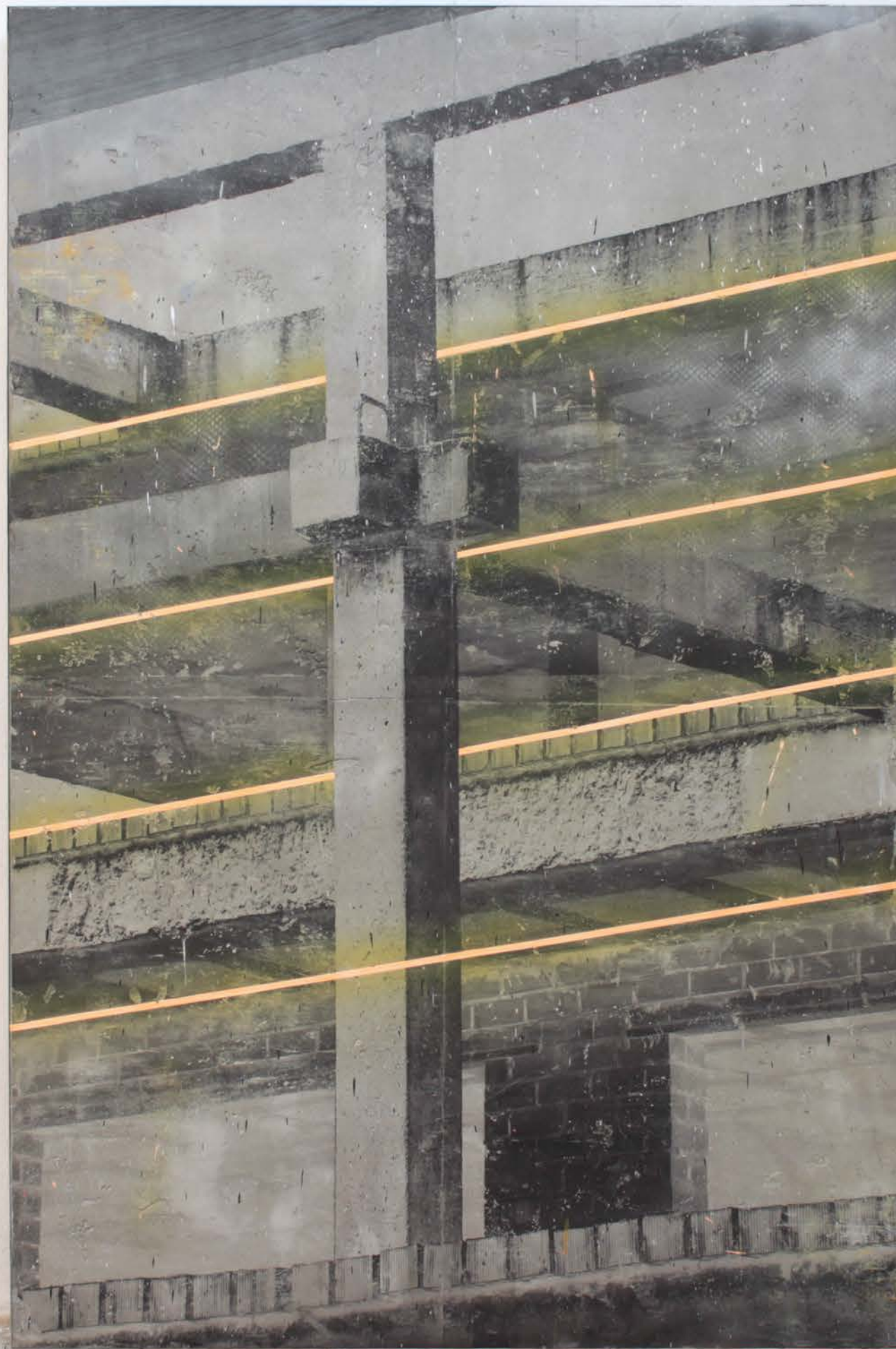
Photography, acrylic, brick
and iron on concrete
180 x 120 cm



Staircase

from Brand New Ruins
series, 2015

Photography and acrylic
on concrete
180 x 120 cm



Structural Framework
from Brand New Ruins
series, 2015

Photography and acrylic
on concrete
180 x 120 cm



Blue Framework
from Brand New Ruins
series, 2015

Photography and acrylic
on concrete
120 x 80 cm



Orange Bricked Walls
from Brand New Ruins
series, 2015

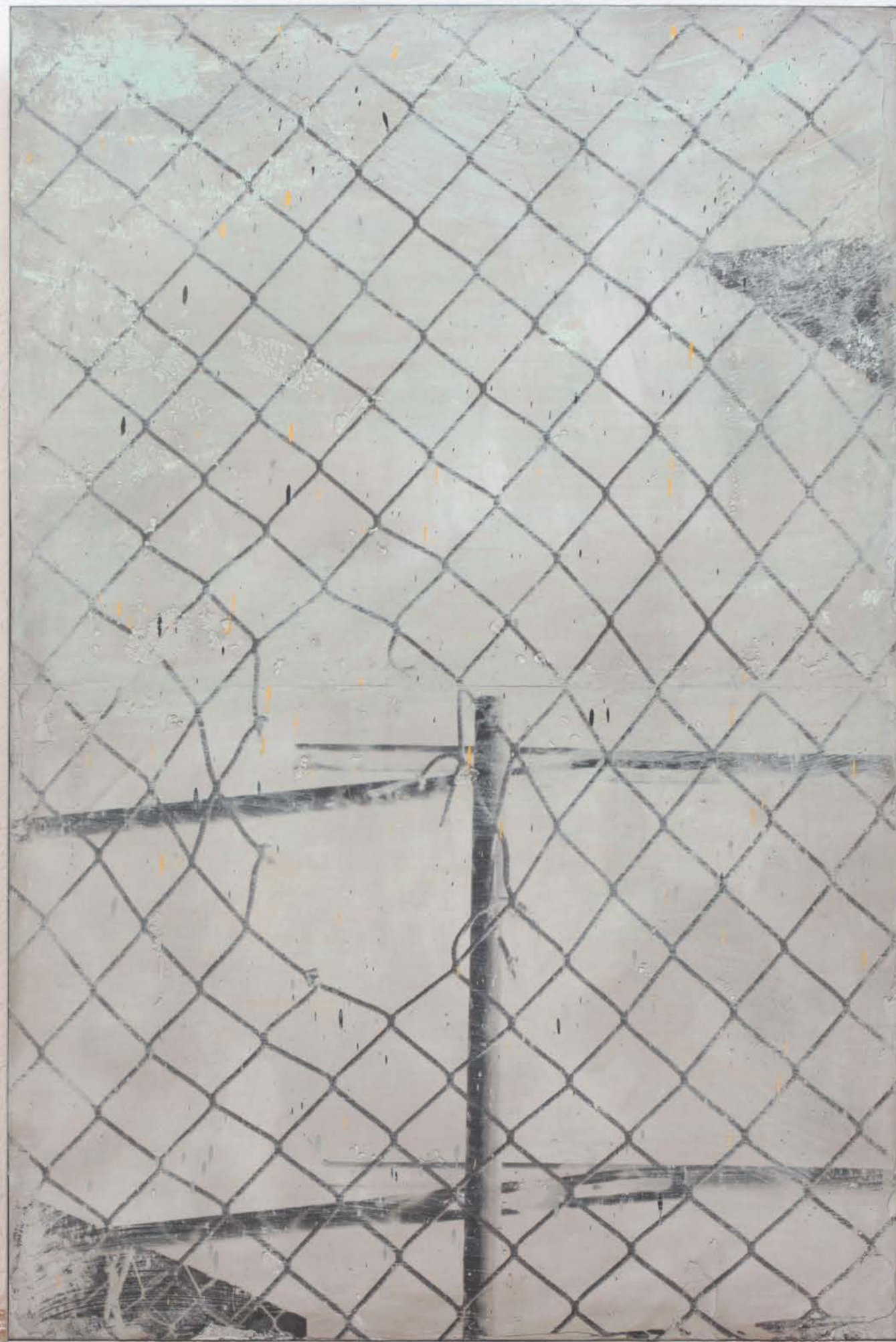
Photography and acrylic
on concrete
120 x 80 cm



Brick Trip

from Brand New Ruins
series, 2015

Photography and acrylic
on concrete
120 x 80 cm



Broken Web

from Brand New Ruins
series, 2015

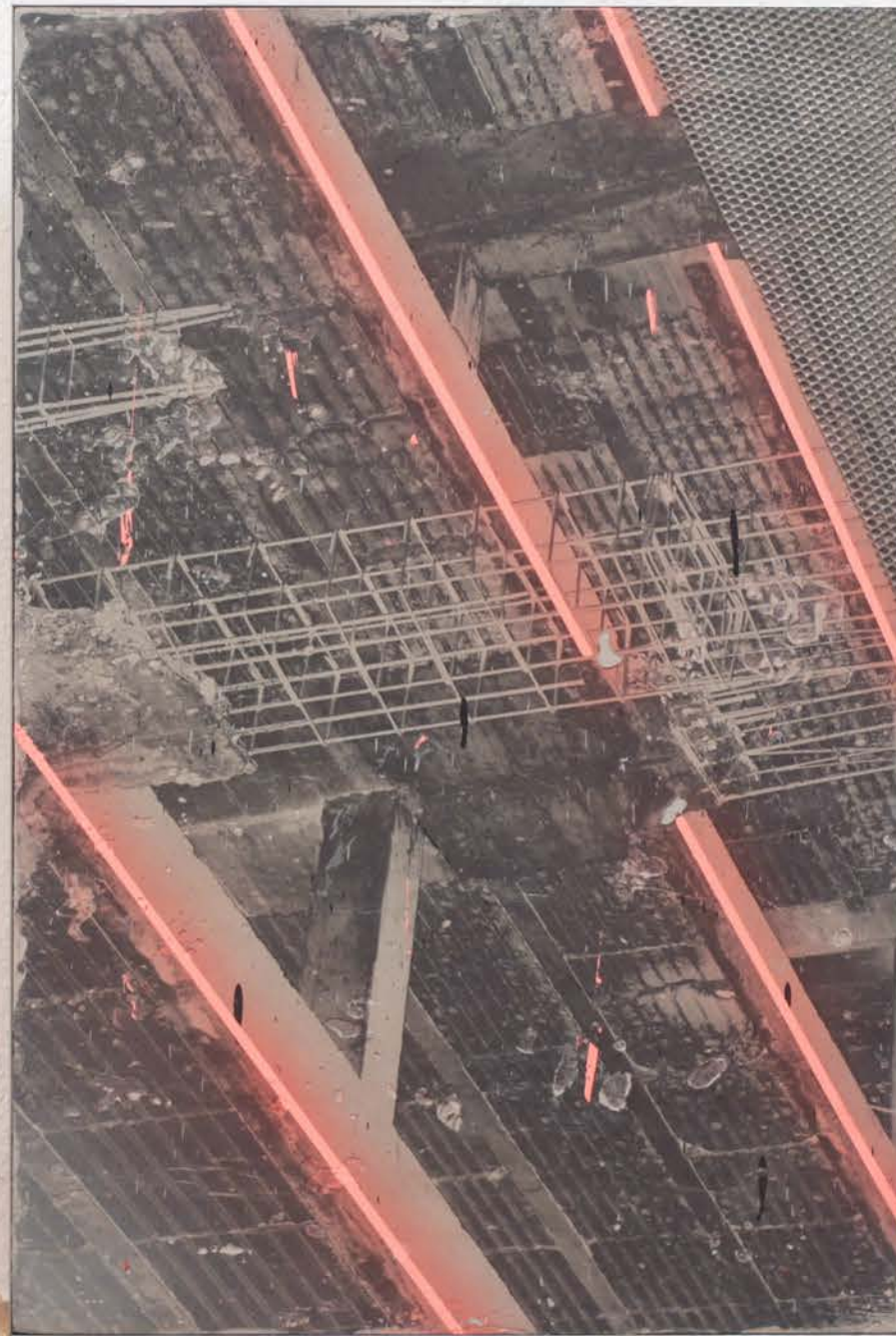
Photography and acrylic
on concrete
120 x 80 cm



Blue Flow

from Brand New Ruins
series, 2015

Photography, methacrylate
and acrylic on concrete
80 x 54 cm



Red Grid

from Brand New Ruins
series, 2015

Photography and acrylic
on concrete
80 x 54 cm



Crack
from Brand New Ruins
series, 2015

Photography
on concrete
31 x 20 cm



Net

from Brand New Ruins
series, 2015

Photography
on concrete
31 x 20 cm



Copper
from Brand New Ruins
series, 2015

Photography
on concrete
31 x 20 cm



Wall

from Brand New Ruins
series, 2015

Photography
on concrete
31 x 20 cm



Hueso y Hormigon
from Brand New Ruins
series, 2015

Cyanotype print on
Fabriano 50% cotton paper
Framed
31 x 20 cm

KEKE VILABELDA. Born in Valencia, 1986. Lives and works in Valencia.

EDUCATION:

2010-2011 MA Fine Arts, Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, (UAL) London, UK

2004-2009 Graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts San Carlos (UPV) Valencia, Spain

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

2015

Brand New Ruins, Rodríguez Gallery, Poznań, Poland

2014

Build-up (2), Plecto Galería y Lokkus Contemporánea, Medellín, Colombia

2013

Build-up, AEA (Ademuz Espai D'Art), Valencia

Mountain Pass, Galería 9, Valencia

The Long Voyage, Museo de Las Atarazanas, Valencia

2012

The Inception of Line, Coldharbour London Gallery, London

2011

WindScreens, Twilight Zone Galerie, Belgium

2010

Espacios en Transformación, Galería 9, Valencia

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

2015

ArteSantader, Kir Royal Gallery, Santander

Saturation "Figure - Ground" (New Spanish Painting), SCAN, Fitzrovia Gallery, London

SCOPE Art Fair, Kir Royal Gallery, Basel

2014

Landshapes, (Ernesto Canovas, Chus Garcia-Fraile, Keke Vilabelda) Kir Royal Gallery, Valencia

Solo Project Basel, Kir Royal Gallery, Basel

Art Beijing. Kir Royal Gallery, Stand B38, Beijing, China

Extraño Lugar Común, Plecto Galería Colombia, Colombia

2013

Art fair Cologne, Kir Royal Gallery, Stand K03, Germany

Summa Art Fair, Kir Royal Gallery, Madrid

Tracks Landscape and Artifice, Suzhou Museum, China

JustMad 13, Stand Kir Royal Gallery, Madrid

2012

O Que Acontece Depois, Centro Cultural Municipio do Cartaxo, Lisbon

7th Annual Big Show, Silas Marder Gallery, New York

Wunderkammer! La Bañera Gallery, Madrid

2011

NEW SENSATIONS 2011, Victoria House, London

International CALL 2011, Galería Luis Adelantado, Valencia

Glory Hole, Islington Studios, London

2010

Fudación Mainel Valencia, Valencia

Premio BMW. Centro Cultural "La Vaguada", Madrid

2009

Premios BANCAJA, IVAM, Sala de la Muralla, Valencia

Premios Fundación Mainel, Galleria Paz y Comedias, Valencia

2008

Premio PAUL RICARD, IVAM Centro del Carmen, Valencia

SELECTED GRANTS & AWARDS:

2015

Grant, Creación Injuve Artes Visuales

Selected for the International Painting Prize, Fundación Guasch Coranty

Runner-up, Premio Senyera

2014

Grant, Ayuda a Proyectos Artísticos Alfons Roig

Honourable Mention, Biennial D'Art de Tarragona

Runner-up, Premio Pintura Mardel

2013

1st Prize, XLI Concurso Nacional de Pintura Villa de Fuente Álamo

Runner-up, XIV Premio de Artes Plásticas Universidad de Murcia

Honourable Mention, XVI Premio Fundación Mainel de Pintura

2012

Grant, Mario Antolín a la investigación pictórica y Medalla de Honor en el XXVII Premio

BMW

1st Prize, XIII Premio Nacional de Pintura de la Real Academia de San Carlos

1st Prize Painting, El Piló. Valencia

2011

SAATCHI New Sensations 2011, London, Channel 4 & SAATCHI Gallery

Special Mention of the Jury, FID Paris (International Drawing Fair)

2010

1st Prize, XXXIV Certamen Nacional Vila de Pego

2009

1st Prize, Internacional Manolo Valdés de Artes Plásticas

2008

Prize-Acquisition, Fondo de Patrimonio Artístico de la UPV

COLLECTIONS:

BMW Ibérica

Real Academia de San Carlos de Valencia

IVAM (Instituto Valenciano de Arte Contemporaneo)

Museo de Arte contemporáneo de Pego. Museo de Fuente Alamo. Museo Siyasa.

Ayuntamientos de Manises, Burjassot, Puzol, Segorbe, Altura, Benissa, Ontinyent, Pego y

Valdepeñas

Fondo de Patrimonio Artístico de la UPV